DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 805 CS 214 818

AUTHOR	Pula, Judith J., Ed.
TITLE	Maryland English Journal. Volume 28, Numbers 1-2, Fall 1993 and Spring 1994.
INSTITUTION	Maryland Council of Teachers of English, College Park.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	130p.; For Volume 29, see CS 214 819.
AVAILABLE FROM	Department of English, Frostburg State University, Frostburg, MD 21532 ($6; $4 each in quantity of 100).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
JOURNAL CIT	Maryland English Journal; v28 n1 Fall 1993-Spring 1994
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Creative Writing; Elementary Secondary Education; *English Instruction; Ethnography; Higher Education; *Invented Spelling; *Sex Differences; Writing Instruction; Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS	Workplace Literacy; *Writing Contexts

ABSTRACT

A semi-annual refereed publication of research and instructional practices in English/language arts and allied fields, preschool through adult levels, this volume of "Maryland English Journal" presents articles on a variety of subjects and showcases the work of young writers. Articles in volume 28, number 1 focus on ethnographic studies of workplace writing: "Course Structures That Elicited Students' Ethnographic Studies of Workplace Writing: The Teacher's Overview" (Nancy Shapiro); "'Baltimore Magazine': Cultural Character Extending to Workplace Writing" (Carla D. Porter); "The Technical Challenge: Telling the Story as well as the Facts" (Michele L. Alverez); "Introducing Program Knowledge: A Study of What Goes into a Federal Review Process" (Michael Colson); and "The Effects of Organizational Hierarchy on Collaborative Writing and Ethnographic Research: A Study of a Government Research Laboratory Public Affairs Branch" (Holly D. Stewart). Volume 28, number 1 also includes nine writing samples of Maryland fourth- and sixth-grade students. Volume 28, number 2 presents articles on a variety of topics: "Love and Laughter among the Merry Wives" (Howard C. Adams); "A Descriptive Study of Gender Differences in Proscribed Language Behavior, Beliefs, and Attitudes" (Jean L. Johnson); "Invented Spelling: Research Applications for the Classroom Teacher" (Janet P. Browne); "Immigration Issues" (Kathryn A. Megyeri); "Roundball Respect" (William J. McKenna); and "Publishing the 'Maryland English Journal'" (Victoria Ross Everett). Volume 28, number 2 also includes 15 writing samples of Maryland fourth- through sixth-grade students and an original poem "I Have Heard Their Singing" (Errol Miller). (RS)

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Maryland English Journal

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Maryland Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts
The State Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English

Volume 28, Number 1 Fall 1993

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Maryland English Journal is a semi-annual refereed publication of research and instructional practices in English/Language Arts and allied fields, preschool through adult levels. The editors encourage authors to submit articles pertaining to instructional practices and/or research of special interest to English/ Language Arts educators and scholars. Appropriate subjects include literature (fiction or nonfiction), linguistics, literacy, critical theory, reading theory, rhetoric, composition, journalism, technical writing, technology in the classroom, English as a second language, pedagogy, assessment, and other professional issues. All areas are equally welcome, as long as the topic is of general interest to the profession and the treatment is accessible to teachers whose particular expertise lies in other areas.

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Maryland English Journal is published by the Maryland Council of Teachers of English/ Language Arts. Editorial offices are located at Frostburg State University. Membership in MCTELA is $15.00 a year and includes the ***Journal***. Subscription price for institutions is $25.00 a year. Single copies of the ***Journal*** are $5.00. Send articles and other submissions to be considered for publication, as well as correspondence about circulation and advertising, to the editor, Department of English, Frostburg State University, Frostburg, Maryland 21532-1099. Views expressed and content of articles are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or beliefs of MCTELA.

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FROSTBURG
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From the Editor's Desk

"Those who dare to teach must never cease to learn."

Plato's words provide the perfect frame for this issue of the *Maryland English Journal*. The first five pieces form a set of four ethnographic studies of workplace writing prefaced by a teacher's overview of the course structures which produced the studies. In her overview, Nancy Shapiro makes it clear that she learned much from and with her students in their graduate course on Theory and Research in Technical Writing at the University of Maryland, College Park, during the spring of 1993. She noted,

> By the end of the semester the traditional relationships between teacher and student, student and text, and university and workplace had blurred completely. Students were being hired by companies that they had used as sites for research; companies and workplaces learned how writing research could offer insight into their particular communication situations; and the students and their teacher became a single consulting team that tackled extraordinarily complex problems together with amazing results.

Two of Shapiro's students conducted their research at local magazine headquarters where they observed the goings on, interviewed staff, and examined artifacts–written elements in the paper trails required to produce *Baltimore Magazine* and *Equus Magazine*.

Baltimore Magazine, started in 1907, is America's second oldest city magazine–Honolulu, Hawaii, founded the first–Carla D. Porter tells us. She observed the positive effects of a non-hierarchical climate at *Baltimore Magazine* planning meetings, which all levels of staff attend voluntarily.

> "Brainstorming sessions" accurately describe the nature and feel of the meetings. Animated, energetic, and provocative story ideas are tossed through the air, retrieved, and recast with a new angle, a unique twist. Commentary springs from the table and leaps into the thought processes of all in attendance to contemplate, revise, dismiss, or accept by way of passionate pleas and ardent rationale. Humor and spontaneity abound and are juxtaposed with a pensive spirit regarding sensitive issues of human interest: This social process as it evolves puts into motion the beginning stages of the final written product by applying the very qualities required of the magazine: the innovative meetings and characters involved "inform, evaluate, enlighten, provoke, entertain and inspire." In all phases of the research and in both textual and observational data collected, these characteristics were consistently apparent.

As a writing consultant, an on-site teacher, she seemed struck, possibly surprised, by the importance a veteran editor attached to presentation or packaging. "Packaging, perhaps, is more important than the quality of writing-writing is almost secondary-its brilliance is hidden if there's no assistance from packaging."

Michele L. Alvarez also concluded that packaging was paramount in *Equus Magazine* production, especially the packaging of technical data in story form. "People will pay...attention to stories," said the co-founder and Medical Director of *Equus*, a DVM. He explained,

> Because much of the material we offer free-lance writers has a substantial [technical] content, they often treat it as other than a story, or fail to look for a story in it. The story form works. If you can't get people to read, you're wasting your time."

The other two of Shapiro's students whose studies appear here, Michael Colson and Holly D. Stewart, both worked at sites and with individuals they do not name specifically in order to respect privacy. Colson explores what goes into a Federal review process; his study focused on program knowledge, "a practical term, a working term-good for managers or trainers when they need to assess how a person understands a particular task." He examines three aspects of program knowledge: organizational guidance, individual qualities, and developed skills. He offers strategies to help strengthen individual and collective program knowledge within an organization, deciding finally that "these strategies are not cure-alls" and that, realistically, "there are many problems which cannot be solved." Counseling teachers who consider having their students do workplace ethnographies, he notes that

> If your students go into real live workplaces to study writing, then they will soon realize that they are studying people. They may not be as lucky as I was with my respondents—Tom was very amusing and talkative, and Bruce was very helpful and honest—but they will quickly realize that writing does not come from pens or computers but from humans in real live situations. Writing this article, I feel relieved from the consultant's burden of making everything "fixable."

While Porter, Alvarez, and Colson concluded that collaboration at their consulting/ observation sites had a mostly beneficial effect on the writing done there, Holly D. Stewart realized that "exhaustive vertical collaboration" led to unanticipated drawbacks.

> Due to exhaustive vertical collaboration, the press releases, no matter who has written them, all end up rewritten...In fact, extensive rewriting is possible because there are no time limits, deadlines, or financial constraints. Unlimited time and money leads to unlimited changes.

The graduate student researchers who went in as writing consultants apparently learned as much as they taught. Within an overarching affirmation stated or implied by each study that horizontal or nonhierarchical collaboration fosters both a desirable working climate and a desirable writing process, each researcher-consultant appears to have learned lessons that have universal relevance to writing and writers, lessons we English teachers may learn anew as we read them here: (1) the brilliance of writing may be lost unless care is taken to package it in a manner the audience finds appealing; (2) one method of effective packaging of facts is looking for the story the facts have to tell; (3) the act of packaging–as the act of producing the writing itself–may be painstaking, slow, even messy, and, ultimately, perhaps not "'fixable,'" since writing is produced by people, "humans in real live situations;" (4) and for those "humans in real live situations," constraints such as deadlines are friends; they keep us focused, help us manage our resources of time and energy with maximum efficiency, help us release the writing process gently when we have learned what there is to learn from it. As Donald Graves puts it, we stop writing when we run out of time or interest in the topic at hand.

The nine authors featured in the *Maryland Showcase for Young Writers* section also offer us lessons. I am reminded of Robert Frost's observation that a poem should begin with delight and end with wisdom. Delight and often sobering wisdom abound in the poems and short stories collected by Mary-Beth Goll, our *Maryland Showcase for Young Writers* Editor, from these ten- and twelve-year-olds.

As *MEJ* editor, drawing near the completion of this first volume under my editorship, I am grateful for the help of many individuals who have eased my way and made the lessons available in this process easier to learn. My husband Michael, who long ago mastered the Mary Poppins secret of great teaching ("In every job that must be done there is an element of fun; find that element of fun and then that job's a game."), helped me stay focused on the joy in this start-up process. With his customary patience, endless good cheer, and amazing DTP magic, Mike urged me toward the balance of packaging the writing as best I could within the time constraints we agreed upon. Deadlines *are* friends. With Michael Colson, I relinquish with relief the writing consultant's burden of trying to fix or polish infinitely. Richard Johnson, fellow wordsmith and writing consultant, helped me give myself permission to relax into my own vision of what Maryland's English journal might be. Vickie Everett, intern *extraordinare*, has already contributed more than I dared hope she might learn from this process.

My colleagues at Frostburg, particularly Dean Philip Allen, and others throughout the State have contributed much to my transition as *MEJ* editor. MCTELA President Lois Stover, members of the MCTELA Executive Board, and *MEJ*'s past Editors and present Associate Editors provide collaborative assistance at its best.

Finally, I invite your submissions and input as readers of *Maryland English Journal*. My own teaching experience is varied–I worked with young people of all ages for ten years in the Garrett County Public Schools before returning to my *alma mater* in 1986 as a reading, composition, and learning disabilities specialist with the Department of English. I believe that the *Journal* needs to reflect the needs, concerns, work, and professional pride of the entire English/Language Arts education community in the State. Help me help *MEJ* be all that it can be.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK iii

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Course Structures that Elicited Students' Ethnographic Studies of Workplace Writing: The Teacher's Overview

Nancy Shapiro
University of Maryland at College Park

In the spring of 1993 I offered a Rhetoric and Composition graduate course on Theory and Research in Technical Writing (English 612). Over the past several years, this course has been taught by several different faculty members, and each iteration has been different, reflecting both the teacher's unique vision and the special chemistry of the student-teacher interaction that develops over the course of a semester. I think everyone involved in English 612 that spring would agree that this course evolved into something quite different from those that went before. By the end of the semester the traditional relationships between teacher and student, student and text, and university and workplace had blurred completely. Students were being hired by companies that they had used as sites for research; companies and workplaces learned how writing research could offer insight into their particular communication situations; and the students and their teacher became a single consulting team that tackled extraordinarily complex problems together with amazing results.

In every course I teach, I begin with the premise that theory and research must be anchored in practice in order to be both understood and appreciated. This course was no exception. I designed the course with three "practical" components: (1) a casebook approach to the study of technical writing; (2) a seminar paper that required students to employ ethnographic methodology to study workplace writing; and (3) a proposal to the workplaces they studied, presenting themselves as communication consultants. Given the time, energy, and money that graduate students commit to their education, I set myself an additional practical goal. I wanted these students to see themselves as writing consultants who would be able to use their hard-earned expertise to define a career and even make some money once they earned their degrees.

The first hands-on components of the course were the case studies. Early on in my planning for English 612, I began to talk to colleagues, associates, and friends about how our understanding of technical and professional writing has changed over the past decade. I asked friends in business, industry, and government agencies to collect writing samples for me to use in my class–preferably entire sequences of documents from planning ideas through finished products or publications. I told my friends that I was assembling "cases" for my graduate students to examine. In addition to assigning the classic articles in the field of technical communication, I wanted my students to try to apply the theories as they understood them to the documents (cases) I had assembled. I assembled one case from primary sources dealing with the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster. We spent time reading memos, technical reports, and transcripts from the Space Shuttle Challenger Inquiry, and reading some of the analyses that were subsequently published concerning the communication failures that led to that tragedy. We also examined very technical materials from the Cosmetics Review Board, an independent certification board that collects and reports on the safety of chemical ingredients in cosmetics.

The second "applied" element of the course was the seminar project. The seminar project for the course was a student-conducted ethnography of a workplace. I gave them the following instructions:

> Each of you will examine the real-world writing in a particular workplace of your choice. For this study, you should plan to spend at least 10 hours on the site, conduct at least two interviews, and collect copies of documents that are typical of that particular environment. While we will discuss the methodology of ethnography in class, you might want to keep a notebook to record your observations.
>
> During class 2/16 you will each present an informal oral report (10-15 minutes) about your observations so far. This oral report will give you an opportunity to synthesize some of your data, pose some preliminary hypotheses, and get the class's reactions to what you have uncovered.
>
> The purpose of the workplace ethnography is two-fold: first, to give you a real-world context for the readings we will do in class; and second, to give you a basis from which to launch your own proposal for an in-house writing course to that organization, agency, or business, or a proposal to revise a critical workplace document (such as new-employee orientation materials or sections of policy manuals). The proposal should be directed to the person responsible for training or the principle decision-maker of the company and address a particular need in that organization. We will discuss the components of the proposal in detail during the semester.
>
> As your final semester project, you will be expected to submit both your descriptive ethnography (including any appendices in the form of writing samples, organizational charts, etc.), as well as the formal proposal, with a cover letter directed to your contact in the organization.
>
> You will complete the project with oral presentations on 4/27 and 5/4.

The final component of applied theory, the consultant proposal, brought the rest of the course together. It provided each of the students a reason to internalize the theoretical readings, the research, and their own ethnographic observation to justify a proposal–a chance to try to persuade a particular audience to take a particular action, specifically to hire the student as a communications consultant.

When we began this course, we all understood that we had some challenging and uncharted roads ahead of us. Establishing contacts in workplace settings was easier for some than others because some students were able to gain access to a place where they were already employed. Yet, for those students, defining a new role within a familiar setting was problematic, especially if the student already had an established relationship with the office or company.

We used weekly letters to keep in touch with the issues that arose in the readings or in the site visits. Every week the students would each write one letter to the class, and every week I would write individual letters to each of the students responding to their letters. Eventually, we all ended up offering advice to each other both in writing and during our class meetings, which, by the end of the semester, had become true consulting sessions where we would pick apart tricky issues of ethics in ethnographic research, audience-specific writing problems in government agencies, and a multitude of surprising, revealing, and unpredictable events that are bound to come up in the real life of a writing researcher and consultant.

In effect, during the course of the semester, a transformation occurred. A class became a research/consulting team. Together, we worked collaboratively to define and address real communication issues that came directly from a variety of workplace settings. As researchers, we struggled with very real questions of ethics, validity, and reliability. As writing consultants, we confronted realities of budgets, personnel, and policies.

The four studies that appear here are representative of the insights and expertise evidenced by all the members of the class as they engaged in the process that produced this research. It is an especially rewarding and humbling experience to find that as teachers, we have so very much to learn from and with our students.

Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 1

Baltimore Magazine: Cultural Character Extending to Workplace Writing

Carla D. Porter
University of Maryland at College Park

In his analysis of the methodologies used to study writing in the workplace, Lester Faigley has emphasized the importance of employing a theoretical approach he terms "the social perspective." According to Faigley, applying this theory requires a broader focus of study to include the social interactions of individuals within a work-related setting, thereby examining the writing according to "social roles, group purposes, communal organization, ideology and theories of a culture." This report includes the results of ethnographic research conducted at the offices of *Baltimore Magazine*, where the creators of this regional monthly produce a magazine catering to the residents of Baltimore, Maryland, and neighboring counties. As the study matured, observations of the workplace redirected the focus from the writing towards the organizational culture wherein the writing develops. The salient feature of this group is that the characteristics of their social setting and the roles they play reflect the same qualities they require of their written product: to "inform, lead, evaluate, enlighten, provoke, entertain, inspire and innovate."

Research into this organization suggests that the professional culture they have developed comprises two fundamental ingredients, collaborative creativity and an egalitarian working structure. Because ethnography examines individuals in the social environments they institute, this study looks at the creators of *Baltimore Magazine*, their roles, their ideologies, and their motivational milieu to illuminate how these factors influence the writing process. How they unite their individualisms for the group purpose suggests the importance of social setting to production.

While many studies of non-academic writing view it more as a technical and secondary function of an organization, the research presented here results from observations of an exclusively creative environment of professional writers, whose written product is of a far more creative than technical element. Therefore, adopting the social perspective to study this professional milieu provided a way to study "the use of language by those whose business is the production of language" (Faigley), and it is around this framework that the study evolved.

METHODS OF INQUIRY

The initial phase of research consisted of an introductory visit to the offices of *Baltimore Magazine*, explaining the purpose and processes of the ethnographic study. After the Managing Editor's welcome and confirmation of the research proposal, I followed with a series of eight visits to the magazine's offices from February 5 through March 29, 1993, for a total of scheduled in advance, usually with a phone call the day before. Follow-up telephone calls were made to various personnel during the month of April for the purpose of asking questions that surfaced during the organization and interpretation of collected data.

Entering into this organization with no extended knowledge of or prior experience with the magazine, qualitative data was obtained by assuming the role of an observer at the onset and then moving along the continuum to more of a participant over time. Using methodological triangulation (Doheny-Farina and Odell; Odell, Goswami, Herrington, and Quick), data collection included the following: (1) a variation in visits according to day of the week and time of day, yielding a more accurate portrait of common and/or consistent activity within the working environment; (2) writing and tape recording copious field notes following observatory visits; (3) accumulating various written documents inherent to the organization, along with both archival and recent issues of the magazine; (4) attending two departmental staff meetings, allowing for an inside look at "brainstorming sessions" and technical aspects of upcoming issues, as well as group interaction in a socially collaborative and potentially hierarchical setting; and (5) conducting open-ended interviews with different levels of the hierarchy, including the Executive Editor, Managing Editor, Style Editor, Associate/Copy Editor and an intern recently hired as an Editorial Assistant. Due to the fast-paced and precarious schedules of those in the magazine industry, all of the above interviews were scheduled in advance and took place both in and outside of the office setting. In addition, I had brief candid conversations with various writers and editorial interns.

RESULTS

The advertising and editorial offices of *Baltimore Magazine* sit high atop 16 South Calvert Street in a tenth-floor suite of intimate space near Baltimore's Inner Harbor. Just inside, the exigence of the publication industry is evident in the halls. Even so, from the initial visit to the offices through to the completion of this research project, the staff of *Baltimore Magazine* graciously and enthusiastically accepted the presence of an outsider who recorded their actions and their words. The Managing Editor was the first approached about conducting the research at the magazine's offices. He not only welcomed the intrusion but offered his and the staff's complete cooperation, space, and time. He required no prefatory notice to the research visits and requested only a pledge of confidentiality regarding the procurement of certain data. Throughout the course of the project he remained a primary informant and point of contact.

Other staff members expressed a willingness to assist in whatever way needed and thought it quite intriguing, amusing, and somewhat complimentary that their organization was selected for study. None seemed imposed upon or threatened by a researcher's presence and freely displayed their individualisms and expertise. Repeated visits and freely displayed their individualisms and expertise. Repeated visits and observations revealed a consistency in their attitude and performance amidst the research setting.

Baltimore Magazine holds the distinguished title of America's second oldest city magazine, originating in 1907 (Honolulu, Hawaii, had the first). After a recent corporate purchase and change of ownership, the present staff assembled in the spring of 1992 and embarked on a "mission" to cultivate together words and images that would reflect a certain character for a new *Baltimore Magazine*. In the process, they developed and defined a social culture.

THE WRITERS AND THEIR ROLES

Although there are many who contribute to the final product of *Baltimore Magazine*, this research focuses on those individuals involved in producing the written text. In regard to educational backgrounds, the editors hold Bachelor's and Master's degrees in either journalism or English. Professionally, they come to their current positions by way of extensive training and experience in reporting, editing, writing, and publishing in many areas of the newspaper and magazine industries. The editorial interns have or are currently working towards Bachelor's and Master's degrees in journalism, English, foreign languages, and international communications.

The responsibilities of the various editors are far-reaching. The Executive and Managing Editors co-direct the magazine's operations. Rotating on a three-month interval, they exchange leading roles, which affords each of them time to pursue reporting and composition in their fields of interest and incorporate the results of their endeavors into future issues (this position is now shared with the Senior Editor as well). They assign various research and writing projects, perform substantive edits on most pieces, and act as liaisons for all editorial work in the department. Written work passes their desk before leaving the department for press, all in consultation with the Editor/Associate Publisher.

In addition to the above responsibilities, they must contend with the magazine's monetary allotment, which frequently requires occasions for troubleshooting–appropriating writing projects and making decisions on the inclusion/exclusion of magazine features. Their roles also require them to construct a physical map of each upcoming issue, which involves determining content emphasis. The decisions on the physical layout of the magazine are made in collaboration with both the advertising and art departments.

The house Style and Art Editors oversee their regular columns in the magazine and routinely have larger features appearing in various issues. Generally, they have the definitive word on all elements of the writing therein. They either compose their own pieces or assign them out to free-lancers according to current budget assessments and work schedules. Periodically, they call on the editorial interns to assist them in conducting interviews and research throughout the course of a particular project.

The Assistant Editor performs probably the most technical aspect of writing within this organization. One of her responsibilities involves copy editing and proofreading for the entire magazine. By her side appear various reference guides that assist in the editorial process, such as the *Associated Press Style Book and Libel Manual.* Along with the Senior Intern, she also manages two particular sections of the magazine which include several short, newsworthy pieces about Baltimore, and a "Datebook" that lists interesting events occurring throughout the region during that particular month. The Assistant Editor assigns these features to interns in the department, who then research and write the various pieces and turn them over for final editing. The Assistant Editor also acts as liaison between the editorial and art departments. She is the first to see all articles after they receive editing and assures that deadlines are met and art accompanies all written text. Because of her need to manage time constraints, she maintains an editorial tracking sheet listing the individuals accountable for projects in progress for upcoming issues.

As suggested in the above description of organizational roles, the editorial interns at *Baltimore Magazine* carry out the majority of research and perform "fact-checking" on textual pieces, as well as participate in on-the-street interviews and reportage for small news sections in the magazine. There may be a small initiation period for interns in this organization; but, as a rule, one editor commented that albeit supported, interns are "thrown in the deep end" at the onset.

WORKPLACE WRITING

Approximately 60% of the writing produced for the magazine is done by free-lancers. When initially introducing this project as a study of in-house writing, the staff commented in unison, "Nobody does any writing here." On the contrary, several acts of composition occur regularly, primarily involving editorial work. As one editor suggested, "We are the cleaner uppers." All of the editors interviewed reported spending only 20-25% of their time writing. Beyond editing, the remainder of their focus lies in the assignment, research, and organization of various writing projects. When the opportunity to write a feature is presented to and accepted by a particular editor, his or her normal duties may be redistributed to others in order to allow for the time factor associated with the composition process. Work schedules and prior commitments influence to a large extent any one person's ability to take on a writing project outside his or her regular job responsibilities.

Although the consensus suggested that little writing takes place in the offices, several in-house documents were collected to illustrate the "technical" look of writing inherent to creative writers. Clearly, technical writing exists to aid in the organization of any work environment, and here the formation of various structural documents, such as the editorial tracking sheet and a copy flow plan, represent the technical element, as do the detailed processes of editing in general. However, in reviewing samples such as the house style sheet, minutes from departmental meetings, and a document typical of an in-house memo, one finds that even their technical writing components possess a creative panache.

More importantly, these sources of inter-office communication provide insight into the social roles and characters within the organization as well as the mood of the working culture. Although designed and composed by senior staff members, the correspondence shows no signs of hierarchy or formality. The documents proceed on a first-name basis, devoid of professional titles, and make frequent use of humor and quips. Equivalent to the standard office memo or letter by definition, the office communication at *Baltimore Magazine* dissents in practice by displaying a free, uninhibited quality–an "Extra, Extra, Read All About It" design.

Here an interesting comparison can be made to Faigley and Miller's research of writing on the job, where individuals in professional and technical occupations complained of employees writing "too informally for those outside the company...and too formally for those within, projecting stuffiness or indifference." Neatly opposing this formula, the writers/editors at *Baltimore Magazine* display a consistently personable character in all facets of their writing. After assessing this organization's in-house written communication, the evidence suggests that, on virtually all levels, technical writing surrenders to artistic rule.

COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY AND THE MOTIVATIONAL MILIEU

Clearly, what defines the exclusive culture at *Baltimore Magazine* is the dimension of collaboration and near absence of hierarchy. Rank and titles seem inconsequential to their working relationships and serve merely as a sign of respect for the knowledge and expertise veterans in the field provide. All those interviewed confirmed that the only true act of hierarchy executed in their work environment comes in the initial assignment of projects. From there the magazine develops in a collaborative effort. Through continued and varied times of research visits, observations revealed a consistent cohesion in the daily operations of and personal interaction among the staff.

But the truest testimony of the collaborative and egalitarian atmosphere at *Baltimore Magazine* is found in witnessing the actions of the interns. Teresa Harrison emphasizes the importance of social context by suggesting that a member of an organization must acquire "knowledge about the nature and characteristics of that organization" and, in doing so, that individual gains the ability to appreciate not only what it is like to be a member of the culture, but also its purpose and goals. In the assimilating process, interns investigate and write shorter sections of the magazine's regular features and, in association with the Assistant Editor and Editorial Assistant, are consulted about and contribute to the editing of their own pieces. They also assist in editing texts of senior writers and editors, and their ideas seem not only voiced but heard. In addition, the magazine institutes what they refer to as a "second reader." No matter a writer/editor's rank on the magazine masthead, she or he can and does call on the expertise of others in the department, no matter their rank, to proof and evaluate the writing. This process of drawing on a community well of insight and expertise and spreading the ideas of the culture occurred routinely during research visits.

The social roles of individuals in this organization play a crucial part in the development of the culture. And the physical atmosphere they have constructed contributes equally to the spirit of the texts they produce. At *Baltimore Magazine*, all levels of the staff mill freely about in and out of the Managing and Executive Editors' offices, using computers and telephones, uninhibitedly asking questions, and providing commentary and quips. The hierarchical arrangement of the offices is merely a result of demographics. One intern interviewed commented on the ability to speak to superiors about anything at any time. Even with the chaotic energy and urgency associated with magazine production evident in the hallways, tension was ostensibly at a minimum and patience abounded all around. Research on collaboration has emphasized the importance of patience and mentoring as qualities in establishing "effective group dynamics" in a work setting (Ede and Lunsford). Continued visits provided evidence to suggest that the staff of *Baltimore Magazine* achieves an appropriate balance between the hierarchy of decision making and the sharing and acceptance of individual ideologies.

An interesting comment came from an editor in regard to the physical demographics of the offices, which she thought called forth a free, creative environment–a "visual Disneyland." Her superior concurred, asserting that it did indeed add a certain motivational ambiance to their world of work. In a study of psychological theories on human resources development, Malcolm Knowles discusses research that has proven the positive effects a physical as well as an organizational (non-hierarchical) climate can have on the mood and increased motivation of a work setting. The majority of comments from interviews with editors add to this data by suggesting that the overall social setting is highly conducive to the production of creative writing.

The Executive Editor of the magazine stressed the need to "create a chemistry where the best ideas are revealed regardless of rank...without the concern of job status, [for] the early stage of the creative process is very chaotic." The opportunity to attend two departmental meetings, where primary attention is given to upcoming publications, provided evidence of the collaborative and chaotic chemistry that defines this organization. All levels of the staff receive an "invitation" to attend and participate in the proceedings, and all accept. Again, the atmosphere is nearly absent of a hierarchical presence.

"Brainstorming sessions" accurately describe the nature and feel of the meetings. Animated, energetic, and provocative story ideas are tossed through the air, retrieved, and recast with a new angle, a unique twist. Commentary springs from the table and leaps into the thought processes of all in attendance to contemplate, revise, dismiss, or accept by way of passionate pleas and ardent rationale. Humor and spontaneity abound and are juxtaposed with a pensive spirit regarding sensitive issues of human interest. This social process as it evolves puts into motion the beginning stages of the final written product by applying the very qualities required of the magazine: the innovative meetings and characters involved "inform, evaluate, enlighten, provoke, entertain and inspire." In all phases of the research and in both textual and observational data collected, these characteristics were consistently apparent.

As suggested in interviews, a degree of hierarchy must exist on some level of the decision-making process, and it does during and after a review of the concepts presented in these collaborative sessions. For example, it is generally the primary author of a piece or person responsible for a writing project who makes the final choice for headlines and other elements of the text based on inspirational ideas of co-workers. And, of course, those who oversee the magazine must make certain administrative choices. But, as a rule, decisions are made and the writing process proceeds in a joint effort. One editor commented, "We develop ideas and build them together, and have since first coming together as a new staff, even down to the question of putting commas before the ands."

An equal and important contributor to the pool of collaboration is the magazine's art department. Various editors emphasized the role visual images play in communicating with an audience by giving a face to the voice of the written text. The photographic art of the magazine and those who create it help articulate the magazine's message and reveal its personality. Working together with the editors and writers, those in the art department construct the visual layout of the magazine from cover to close, including color, size, and type of fonts used in each article and feature. Interviewees addressed the importance of a magazine's visual presentation. In describing the dynamics of packaging, one editor commented: "You can have the greatest, high-minded type articles [inside], but no one will read them if they're not packaged well." An even stronger testament to the power of visuals came in a similar assertion from another editor: "Packaging, perhaps, is more important than the quality of writing–writing is almost secondary–its brilliance is hidden if there's no assistance from packaging." Conducive to the working culture and the writing produced therein, is this inherent recognition and appreciation for all facets of a magazine's language and an awareness that all play an equal role in creating its character.

VOICES ON VOICE

This research applies Faigley's theory on the social perspective by offering a portrait of the place and people and how social roles and "communal organization" influence workplace writing. Equally important to the ethnographic study are the ideologies of those who come together to create a written product that must communicate to a particular audience and the effect those independent ideologies have on their goal as a group. Responses to specific questions asked during interviews involved individuals describing (1) their own formulas for effective writing, and (2) how they feel their combined perceptions affect the magazine's voice and, ultimately, its success.

During separate interviews each respondent listed the same essential qualities of effective writing. They agreed that it demands competent reporting; structure; a mastery of the technical writing components of a publications industry, combined with the creative, reflective dimension of writing; the essentiality of a certain "magic"; and the ability to "amaze, amuse, and alarm." With a grounding in the educational fields of writing, their specified qualifications reflect the bases of classical Greco-Roman rhetorical theory, seeking an amalgamation of proper structure, eloquence, and talent.

An eclectic mix and application of ideas helps to construct the magazine as a whole, as well as an environment in which creativity can thrive. But some suggested that different ideologies can also threaten the concept of a consistent and definitive voice. Too much collaboration, for instance, can sometimes result in multiple points of view where the focus becomes lost and the writing loses its power of persuasion (see Ede and Lunsford). One editor suggested that it is important in that position to listen to and respect the authority of the writer on what it is he or she has written. A successful editor must be able to empathize with a writer's processes and keep in tune with the craft of investigating, "extract[ing] information, and keep[ing] observations acute."

Results of interviews also revealed that a lack of coherence in their conjecture of audience can create an inconsistency in the character of the magazine, such as different voices and tones writing to different educational levels, and keeping in mind the regional demographics of audience yet sensing an opposition as to what a city magazine should be. And an additional factor contributing to the magazine's cohesion involves economic constraints. Budgetary issues may influence the inclusion/ exclusion of certain features, therefore effecting a change in emphasis or desired results. The price of proficient free-lancers may at times be out of reach, and alternatives found might appease but do not always fit the bill.

These discussions on the quality of writing and the factors which influence a characteristic voice only hint at the multifaceted elements affecting the magazine's success. Yet they provide another example of the role of individual ideologies in creating a team-oriented product. The success of the magazine itself is another study. Information received from the offices listed *Baltimore Magazine*'s circulation at approximately 50,000–80% subscription, 20% newsstand. Further research would include following the magazine to note the influences of the inner social culture on the reading community outside (Faigley).

SUMMARY

An increased emphasis is being placed on studying professional social cultures and their significance to the writing dynamic. Drawing on Lester Faigley's theory of the social perspective, Lee Odell asserts that "for writers in non-academic settings, we have paid too little attention to the organizational context in which they do their writing...the relationships between the process of composing and the knowledge, values and experiences that writers share with others in the office." This research of professional, creative writers in a predominantly collaborative and egalitarian setting provides an interesting comparative study of job-related writing. Results suggest that the social environment is highly conducive to the writing process and its success, and therefore emphasize the importance of applying the social perspective to study writing on the job.

Equal to the significance of applying socially-oriented research to workplace writing are the implications of ethnography as writing pedagogy. The opportunity to implement classroom theory in a work setting outside academia is an invaluable experience. Assuming the role of a writing researcher and consultant allows students to see classroom material with new eyes and learn on a new and elevated level through their collaboration with and instruction to others. In essence, theory becomes tangible–it has a new purpose. Implementing ethnography also introduces students in the humanities to areas and processes of scientific research they may not be familiar with, therefore expanding their knowledge and experience across the disciplines.

The myriad facets of discourse analysis to explore begin to surface more clearly during the course of research, perhaps more than one semester can address. But with ample classroom and practical material to process, students can bring together their individual project experiences for group collaboration to augment the learning process. Most importantly, ethnographic research can provide students with an opportunity to extend their comprehensive knowledge to arenas outside of the academic environment and to assume a potential place in the work world.

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MCTELA: A Professional Organization for Educators Interested in English/Language Arts

The Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (MCTELA) was founded in the late 1950s. Originally geared to English instruction, it expanded in the 1970s to include all language arts teachers. Business meetings and conferences used to take place at the same annual meeting, but the organization has grown to include monthly Executive Board meetings and semi-annual conferences. Activities include publication of the *Maryland English Journal*, quarterly newsletters, Teacher of the Year selections, "Showcase" writing competitions for elementary students, and representation as an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English.

The purposes of the Council are to improve the quality of instruction in English/Language Arts at all educational levels, pre-kindergarten through university; to encourage research, experimentation, and investigation in the teaching of English; to sponsor publications of interest to English/Language Arts teachers; to represent the interests of English/Language Arts before the public; and to integrate the efforts of all those who are concerned with English/Language Arts instruction.

Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 1

The Technical Challenge: Telling the Story as Well as the Facts

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In the business of journalism, it is writing that is generated as an economic commodity. This is a limited ethnographic study that examines such writing in the workplace of *Equus Magazine*, a successful specialty publication interested in the nature of horses and concentrating predominantly on equine health care issues. I focused on the article writing and editing process, beginning with two assumptions: one, because the articles usually have a substantial technical content, I speculated there would be conflicting editorial strategies concerning the presentation of complex data to lay-readers; and two, I assumed there would be a significant number of readers dissatisfied with the technical information. However, as the study progressed, my research gave only nominal support to these theories. It became apparent that enhancing reader satisfaction by improving the accessibility of technical data is a productive and on-going process for the writers. This report rapidly evolved into an analysis of a magazine that effectively incorporates technical data into high quality, informative, and entertaining writing.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of this study parallels the same prescribed tasks as that of a longer ethnography, but does not include the same depth of investigation due to time limitations. The tasks of an ethnographer, according to Linda Brodkey, are to "observe daily life, interview informants, keep field notes, review them, attend group functions, and examine whatever artifacts are manifest in the situation."

OBSERVE DAILY LIFE

To gather data, I made six visits to the magazine's production site between January 27th and April 1st, 1993, totaling 14.5 hours of investigation. The Managing Editor preferred the staff not be observed or interviewed during their busy deadline periods. Visits were scheduled in advance with a point of contact and several had to be postponed due to heavy work commitments of the staff. Therefore, access to observe the workplace functioning as a complete entity was limited. Most of the people at the magazine were not comfortable being watched while they were writing and preferred to share information in the informal interview setting.

INTERVIEW INFORMANTS

The most valuable method of data collection consisted of interviews with the editorial and writing staff, the director of the art department, and the Medical Editor, who is also a practicing Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and a co-founder of the magazine. These interviews were recorded on tape and entered into field notes. The interviews were kept informal but used prepared questions about the production of feature articles, concomitant with spontaneous inquiries into the operation of the magazine as a whole. The questions focused primarily on two main points:

1. What do you perceive to be the objectives of *Equus Magazine*?
2. How do you see your writing and editorial work supporting these objectives?

Additional questions were usually singular to that particular interviewee's job and to their opinions on various horse-related topics. The interviews were conducted privately at the worksite of each person with the exception of one spontaneous group discussion.

ATTEND GROUP FUNCTIONS

During one visit, I was able to observe and join in a brief, informal, group question-and-answer session that spontaneously took place in the lunch area and dealt with a variety of *Equus*-related topics. This afforded an uncommon opportunity to see group dynamics at work in the staff. It was uncommon because usually the people were observed working by themselves in isolated offices and were rarely seen collaborating.

EXAMINE ARTIFACTS

The staff members produced textual examples of their work when requested. A working copy of one of the more technical articles was collected, along with samples of the graphic designs generated by the art department; various back issues of the magazine for reference purposes; and several peripheral texts, which included items such as style guidelines, correspondence, advertising brochures, etc., items that had little or nothing to do with the creation of the articles. Reader surveys, sent out by the magazine to gather feedback on subscription losses, were also made available for this report. Collecting these data according to ethnographic methodologies provided a detailed look at the use of technical information in an entertainment vehicle such as a magazine.

RESULTS

ATMOSPHERE AND SETTING

Equus Magazine's offices cover half the sixth floor of a small office building in Maryland. The carpets are plush, the color benign, and the nameplates polished brass. The suite is a tasteful, modern, and professional setting, suitable for a specialty publication that has won top honors in its field for the past ten years. The magazine's most prestigious award, a large crystal chalice presented by American Horse Publications for Outstanding Magazine of the Year 1976, is discretely displayed at the side of the receptionist's desk in the lobby. Classy lithographs of upscale, modern horse designs are tastefully arranged throughout the suite.

The work spaces at *Equus* are compartmentalized and rather isolated. The offices are small, but most have windows. It is interesting to note that the Managing Editor, who is on-site Monday through Friday, in charge of the daily production of the magazine and an active writer/editor as well, has one of the smallest and most cluttered offices available. The rest of the suite contains the art department, accounting offices, an advertising area, a copy room and file area, an employee lunch/break room, a mail room, and a circulation department. The employees were dressed in a variety of casual styles to suit their personal tastes; no suits-and-ties were evident. The entire staff consisted of twenty eight people, of whom nineteen were women. The overall atmosphere, when I was present, was dedicated, capable, cordial, quiet, and slightly reserved. Although people were polite and helpful, they did not volunteer many extra details. This made the interviewing process tiresome and about two hours was the most productive amount of time to spend at the site during any one visit.

EQUUS'S OBJECTIVES

According to my research, *Equus Magazine*'s primary objective is to articulate the multi-faceted world of horses for the lay-reader, in order to facilitate the horse's health and well-being and to promote its positive interaction with people. *Equus* is a monthly periodical conceived by its Editor-in-Chief to be a magazine "about horses, not about events and people." *Equus* is the only magazine that consciously seeks to be an advocate of the horse; in this respect, it is unique in its field. Dr. Matthew Mackay-Smith, DVM, co-founder and Medical Editor of *Equus*, states that the magazine's objective is to function as

> a bridge between the veterinarian and the horse owner, bringing to our readers the expertise of the nation's leading authorities on the care and maintenance of the animal, through the talents of writers who are able to translate technical information into a language easily understood and rapidly absorbed. (Mackay-Smith 6)

To facilitate this objective, the articles often contain an extensive amount of technical and medical information in order to educate the reader and promote knowledgeable, effective care of the horse. It is a challenge for the editorial staff to create a balance between accurately introducing technical data and continuing to entertain their readers.

AUDIENCE

An analysis of audience demographics reveals a tightly-drawn profile of a well-educated land owner with enough disposable income to afford horses. A 1992 subscriber study conducted by Beta Research defines the *Equus* subscriber as:

- An experienced horse owner; 96% of their subscribers own horses, 61% for more than ten years.
- Affluent and established; 54% have a household income above $50,000 and 70% own 5 or more acres of land, with 26 acres the average.
- Well educated; 72% have attended college and 47% are college graduates.
- The average age of the *Equus* subscriber is 38 years old. 37% of their readers have subscribed to the magazine for more than 5 years and 20% for more than 10.

- According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, Schaumburg, Illinois, *Equus Magazine* has an average paid circulation of 134,135.

Clearly, this is a well-educated audience, capable of understanding a considerable amount of technical writing. But there is a small portion of the audience that loses interest, due to the complex subject matter. An analysis of the magazine itself is useful in providing a context to understand why the level of technical writing is necessary in the articles.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Equus Magazine was first published in November, 1977, and has gone through two re-designs, the latest in 1991. Today the magazine is a refined combination of glossy color photos, high-tech graphics, free-hand illustrations, well-written text, and useful advertisement, all served up monthly in approximately 120 pages of quality paper.

The primary articles, according to *Equus*'s "Writers' Guidelines," contain approximately 2,000 to 2,500 words. The topics range from biological discussions of a body part or system, like the digestive or reproductive system, to subjects such as species adaptation or evolution. Other primary articles contain how-to presentations of health care strategies or training methods, and human interest stories about famous human or equine personalities. Each issue is replete with advertisements for every conceivable (and in-conceivable) product available for today's horseowner. Products range from the latest in high-tech, ultra-sound leg therapy, equine life insurance, and riding vacations in Ireland, to saddles, clothes, and pickup trucks. Clearly, *Equus Magazine* is a product designed to entertain and sell, as well as to serve as a comprehensive pedagogical tool. Its effectiveness in these multiple roles depends on the ability of the editors to present scientific and technical data in a format that can both entertain and sell the magazine to their audience.

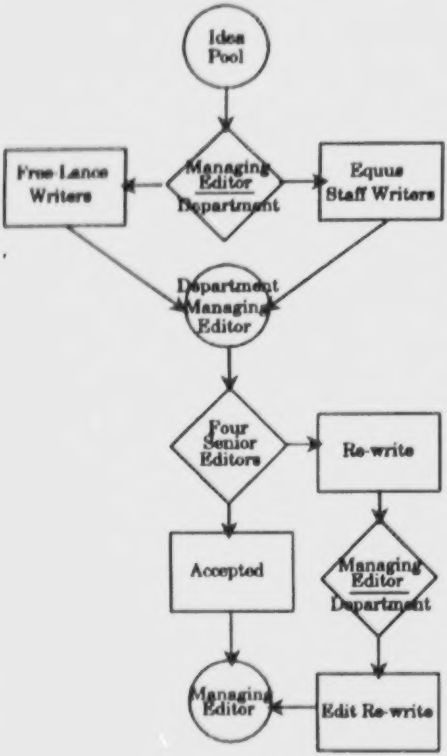
WRITING AND EDITING

There are many magazines where little or no in-house writing takes place, only the re-writing of free-lance work. At *Equus*, the editors write at least one or two of the primary feature articles and several secondary ones for each monthly issue, as well as extensive rewriting and copy editing. There are seven people on the editorial staff, ranging from the President of the company–who is also the Editor-in-Chief–to the Editorial Coordinator–who occasionally writes as well as edits.

IDEA POOL

In contrast to the animated brainstorming sessions that take place at *Baltimore Magazine*, as observed by Carla Porter (this volume), the writing process at *Equus* begins with an idea pool formed by the four senior editors. They discuss their proposals, together with occasional recommendations from the readers, staff members, and free-lance contributors, whenever they feel it is necessary to generate new topics. From this activity, a pool of ideas is formed and tentatively assigned to writers four to six months in advance. Some topics go to five or six regular free-lance contributors. The magazine's "Writers' Guide" informs these journalists that

> *Equus* is written in a clear, concise, conversational style. Each story maintains the tone of one horseman sharing information with another. The complex or technical nature of the material presented can make this a difficult task, but *Equus*'s intent is to offer advice by informing without lecturing.


Idea Pool
Free-Lance Writers
Managing Editor
Department
Equus Staff Writers
Department Managing Editor
Four Senior Editors
Re-write
Accepted
Managing Editor
Department
Managing Editor
Edit Re-write

USE OF RHETORICAL THEORY

The Managing Editor emphasized in her interview that, to have the greatest possible affect on their readers, the articles must be entertaining as well as informative. Thus *Equus*'s texts are grounded on the classical rhetorical theory that contends good writing should delight as well as teach. To maintain the magazine's pedagogical objectives, scientific and technical information must be included in the articles. Presenting such technical data in a style that will also entertain is a serious, on-going challenge. To meet it, the writers and editors exploit the story leitmotif.

THE STORY LEITMOTIF

According to the Medical Editor, most writers new to the *Equus* philosophy "fail to look for the narrative behind the facts." This seems to be an anomalous concept for a medical doctor, a type of professional more likely to produce work based solely on empirical data. When asked to elaborate on this concept, the doctor explained:

> There is always a story behind the technical data. Coming from a teaching background, I like our readers to accept a challenge, but you have to look for a balance. People will pay more attention to stories. Because much of the material we offer free-lance writers has a substantial [technical] content, they often treat it as other than a

> story, or fail to look for a story in it. The story form works. If you can't get people to read, you're wasting your time.
> (Taped Interview, April 1, 1993)

This comment echoes Linda Brodkey, who states, "It could certainly be argued that there is a sense in which all scholarly prose is narrated as well as written...every academic essay could be read as a story told." While effective, the story motif alone is not enough to make the audience cognizant of the specialized material. Enabling the reader to understand the technical vernacular of equine veterinary medicine takes editing skills that can eliminate, as Selzer calls it in "A 'Readable' Technical Style", "the inappropriate formality that technical writers often strive for in an attempt to sound more professional." The non-horse-owning editors (about two thirds) are often able to explicate the horse-related vernacular that might exclude and confuse the lay-reader.

THE *EQUUS* ETHOS

The Managing Editor has the final say over material ready for publication. She makes sure a quality is present–collectively referred to by the staff as the "*Equus* Voice." This quality refers to the combined ideals, style, and tone of *Equus Magazine*. The presence of the *Equus* Voice establishes the magazine's ethos; it ensures the high standards set at the magazine's inception seventeen years ago are still being maintained. For example, in the introductory editorial of the magazine's first edition, the editor states:

> The truth, the significance and the economics [of horse ownership] will always be faced squarely in order to give our readers, as horsemen and consumers, a clear choice in the matters at hand. (Shinitzky Editorial 3)

One hundred and eighty seven issues later, the audience can see that the *Equus* ethos is still intact when they read an editorial comment concerning a complex and deadly genetic disease of horses:

> A product [the horses with the disease] in demand is good for the economy, but a guiding truth for *Equus*, and I hope of horse owners, is that horses are not a mere commodity and must be treated accordingly. (Shinitzky "Pondering the Response" 8)

The consistent presence of this *Equus* Voice, functioning as an advocate for horses and owners, appears to be a large part of the magazine's successful presentation. Ultimately, the tone with which *Equus* establishes an ethos creates trust and convinces their audience that what is important about a topic is being made available to them in the most accurate and honest presentation possible. The value of this conviction is that ethos sells; when people trust a product, they continue to buy it.

THE ART DEPARTMENT

While the written text may be the heart of the magazine, it is the visual images that first catch a reader's attention. In the art department, the text is matched with appropriate graphics and illustrations that fulfill all

Equus's objectives of teaching, entertaining, and selling. Ideas for illustrating the articles sometimes come from several members of the staff, forming one of the few areas of collaboration in the workplace. When the graphics are added, a balance is sought between a piece's visual appeal and its ability to instruct the audience. During my research, there appeared to be occasional disagreements between staff members who have a more articulated understanding of the technical data and those who may be more sensitive to what readers find attractive. The more senior editor's opinion seemed to be deferred to. This type of dissension appears to be a regular part of the process the editors go through to articulate the technical data.

Equus uses a number of hand-drawn illustrations, paintings, computer-generated graphic designs, and photographs in each monthly issue in order to fulfill its multiple objectives of teaching, entertaining, and selling. Due to the specific and detailed data in most of the articles, the graphics are usually generated specifically for each particular piece. The Art Director produces most of the drawings freehand and the graphic designs are generated with Quark Software on Super-Mac computers. Complex textual concepts are usually visually depicted in more than one medium to provide readers with as clear and as precise an explanation as possible.

A good example of *Equus*'s ability to unite disparate elements into an informative whole is found in the May 1993 issue. An article titled "The Improbable Hock" (Moore) is a biologically-centered text, discussing the evolution and attributes of the main rear leg joint of the horse. While this may not be a particularly exciting topic in itself to even the most enthusiastic horseperson, the writer finds an entertaining narrative behind the data.

By making use of rhetorical devices such as analogy, comparison, and simile, in addition to the testimony of experts in the fields of paleontology, natural history, evolution, and veterinary medicine, the *Equus* writer produces a text that is a well-researched and well-written heuristic. When bold color graphics are added, an attention-getting story is created that can both teach and delight.

READER RESPONSE

There is a downside to producing technical articles that require close reading and careful attention, even if the text is well packaged with colorful graphics. Reader surveys conducted by the magazine three months earlier indicated that a small segment of *Equus*'s audience found their presentation of technical data unappealing. A survey question asked, "In general, do you think the articles are too advanced, too introductory, or about right?" Out of 139 surveys returned, 108 readers responded to this question; there were 17 complaints that the material is "too technical." A small but possibly significant percentage of readers experienced some degree of discontent with the technical level of the writing, stating that the writing is often "too technical" and they "lose interest," some to the point where they fail to re-subscribe. While there are inherent flaws in survey methodology, as Paul Anderson points out, "the sample of people asked to respond may not faithfully represent the population under study; the group of people who actually respond may be unrepresentative." However, in a competitive field like journalism, a small business would likely give consideration to the results. The cumulative effect of ignoring reader complaints could lead to a reduction in the magazine's circulation over time. Although information was unavailable for this study concerning any qualitative and quantitative analyses applied to the surveys, the editors assured me such criticism is taken seriously. It is also not known what changes may result from the implementation of the survey feedback, but the continued success of the periodical suggests that serious modification of the text is made when necessary to ensure its content and presentation continues to entertain and delight its audience.

SUMMARY

Equus Magazine appears to have remained a viable, marketable commodity in the competitive journalism field for several reasons. The magazine's attention to detail and willingness to take additional steps to ensure the effective transfer of knowledge to its audience allows *Equus* to fulfill its objectives to instruct as well as entertain. A consistent commitment to their ethical standards reinforces the magazine's role as an advocate and continues to establish trust in their product with their audience. *Equus*'s expertise at researching and presenting a problem from multiple perspectives in an entertaining narrative form is the key that opens the door on the technical data for its readers and makes it a successful pedagogical medium.

THE VALUE OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Utilizing ethnographies as a pedagogical tool incorporates several learning strategies into one educational experience. Students must make contacts in the actual business world in a manner similar to applying for a position of employment. I see this tasking their organizational and preparedness skills. Collecting data by using ethnographic methodology allowed me to observe multiple ways writing is produced and used in a business setting. Many writing applications were observed that could have been overlooked if one were simply a guest, client, or even an employee in one specific occupation. Observing the writers and reviewing the texts provided an opportunity to locate theories of technical communication in a real-world context. I was forced to examine how ethical issues, problems of collaboration, budget limitations, and time constraints affect the writing process in ways that cannot be reproduced in an academic setting. The only drawback to using ethnographies is the amount of time required outside of the classroom for planning and execution. The value of the knowledge gained through ethnographic research may be considered time well spent for most students.

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Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 1

Introducing Program Knowledge: A Study of What Goes into a Federal Review Process

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For students of professional writing, doing an ethnography can be an extremely valuable experience. It can lead to such practical things as a job, or to connections that can lead to a job (which, needless to say, a library-research paper would not be able to do), and it also gives you a deeper sense of what it is like to be a professional in a particular organization. Whether your student wants to be a "professional writer," or a professional who writes well, an ethnography gives him or her a chance to explore the profession, see what kind of work and writing is called for, and also see what it takes to get this work and writing done successfully. One can compare the experience of doing an ethnography to an internship, but an ethnography has the added benefit that you do not really work for the place that you are studying—you do not have to xerox and you can come and go whenever you please.

I knew this pleasure as much as anyone in the class, because I had worked at my place of study the summer before as an intern. And it was nice not to have to do the xeroxing. But I should say that a much greater benefit of doing an ethnography is the intellectual responsibility that comes with it. I was forced to think a lot more about the organization. Working there before, I had of course thought about the office, but that was mostly about my duties and whatever casual observations I made about the rest of the office. Doing an ethnography, however, forced me to think of the organization as a whole, not only about the work but the people doing the work, along with their work habits and their relationships with each other. When you do a professional writing ethnography, you are not just studying written texts, but the writer, the process of writing, and the workplace culture that influences these writers and texts. Doing ethnography brings to life all of these factors in writing that students in classes normally only read about.

MY ETHNOGRAPHY: A STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The aspect of writing that I focused on in my ethnography was knowledge. The importance of knowledge to writing is so fundamental that it can go unnoticed. As Teresa Harrison argues, however, what you do (writing) depends on what you think (12). Of course, this simple formula is complicated by the concept of knowledge, which is no simple concept. Much of the epistemological work done in the 20th century has focused on knowledge as a social construct, the idea that knowledge is not the result of objective observation so much as it is the result of social consensus (see Farrell, 610). The concept of social knowledge has gained favor in literary theory, as we can see in the works of Michel Foucault, among others, and the concept has also gained prominence in the field of professional writing.

Teresa Harrison, for example, advocates the study of "organizational knowledge," the system of beliefs and attitudes that shapes the decision-making processes of organizations. Harrision's article is a good review of research on organizational knowledge, as well as a good road map for future research. Harrison suggests two areas of study: (1) the particular cognitive systems of the organization, and (2) the organization's patterns of discourse. Studying the organization's cognitive systems reveals the ways in which an organization constructs knowledge, stores it, and transfers it to its new members. Studying the patterns of discourse uncovers the ways in which symbols reflect the organization's culture and even inculcate newcomers into that culture. Harrison argues for the study of organizational knowledge because of the rhetorical insight it gives into the organization: "To take seriously the notion of context is to build in students an appreciation for the idiosyncratic nature of terminologies, semantic systems, beliefs and values, and reasoning processes that characterize any independent social grouping" (19).

Taking Harrison's advice, I proceeded to study the organizational knowledge of my organization. I followed the first path that Harrison delineates for studying organizational knowledge—the ways in which an organization constructs, stores, and transfers its knowledge. The organization that I studied was a medium-sized Federal agency headquarters in Washington, D.C. I focused on the division where I had worked the previous summer, which is a small, six-member division that handles environmental issues.[1] My methodology consisted of studying the division's texts, interviewing its members, and observing daily activities.

Eventually, I realized that assessing the organizational knowledge of a small division was still a weighty task for one semester of ethnography; and consequently I narrowed my study further to two particular individuals and their work reviewing one environmental program. I found that their knowledge of this program was influenced by different knowledge contexts—contexts that originate within the organization as well as contexts that the professionals brought to the organization. I grouped the various influential contexts under one term, "program knowledge," which is an individual's understanding of the particular program that he or she is working with. For the remainder of this article I will sketch out the components of program knowledge, as well as demonstrate how program knowledge affects an individual's work, whether it be in creating texts or in revising them. Once we understand program knowledge, I believe we can understand why people think in certain ways and make certain decisions that affect both their writing and their work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE PROGRAM AND REVIEW PROCESS

I regret not being able to be more concrete in my description of the program and work of this particular division, but at the same time the program and work of this division is very technical and in many ways (as my classmates frequently informed me) not very interesting. Suffice it to say that the program was set up by a Federal regulation allowing private firms to voluntarily alleviate the environmental impacts that their operations cause by proposing various mitigation measures, which, if accepted, may receive Federal funding. The private firm, usually through an environmental consultant, conducts a study of the impacted area, then develops a list of mitigation measures.

Once this study is completed, the private firm submits the program to the agency for Federal approval. This agency is set up like other agencies in that it has various regional offices throughout the country. The private firms submit their programs to these regional offices for initial review. The regional offices then review the program and write up a draft of what is called the "record of approval," in which they summarize the proposed measures and write an initial determination approving or disapproving the measures. When the regions complete this initial review, they forward the program and record of approval to the headquarters in Washington for review.

At this point, the division which I studied reviews and revises the region's determinations. The program and accompanying record of approval then goes to either Tom or Bruce, the two division staff members who do most of the headquarters review work for this program. Either Tom or Bruce reads the program submissions to see if they concur with the regional determinations, then if necessary revises the record of approval to match the determinations. Once their work is done they forward the program and the revised record of approval to Maureen, their supervisor, who reviews the program and record of approval as well. After reviewing the program she forwards it to the agency's political and legal offices who check for any political or legal trouble spots. When the legal office gives their endorsement, the approval finally becomes official. Headquarters then informs the region of the official determinations, and the region informs the private firm of the agency's decisions.

My "view" of the process was limited to this particular division, particularly the work done by Bruce, Tom, and Maureen. I could not witness how the regions made their determinations, nor could I witness what the political or legal offices did with the programs once they got them. My emphasis, however, was not on the process as a whole, but the knowledge of the program as exhibited by Tom and Bruce. The fact that they spent most of their time reviewing and revising also made the study of knowledge seem logical because, obviously, it takes knowledge to decide if somebody is wrong. Certainly, the initial regional-private firm interaction would have made for a good rhetorical study, as would the high stress atmosphere of the headquarters' political and legal offices (if I could stomach it). But I chose instead a more humble, but in other ways more satisfying subject: two individuals and their daily struggles with their occupation. Even with this particular division there were many examples of rhetorical actions that I could study (such as environmental policy papers or their work with environmental impact statements), but since the semester was short I chose to work with an area of rhetoric that greatly interests me, knowledge.

PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE

Now that we have a general understanding of the program and the review process, we can examine the mental tools that Tom and Bruce bring to their own review process. I refer to these mental tools with the collective term "program knowledge." Program knowledge is a unique cognitive system in that it is completely directed toward one particular organizational activity, in this case, the review of a Federal environmental program. It is important to see program knowledge as at once a general and specific term. Generally speaking, program knowledge reflects the entire knowledge a person has, along with his or her capacity to learn, and the ways he or she learns (knowledge of any one thing will be dependent on a person's entire cognitive make-up). At the same time, however, when we study program knowledge we are studying a person's knowledge as it relates to a particular program (or, if you're unhappy with this Federal term, any other singular work activity). All in all, program knowledge is a practical term, a working term—good for managers or trainers when they need to assess how a person understands a particular task.

Tom and Bruce, for instance, must draw upon their program knowledge of this particular environmental program in order to review the region's record of approval and thus give headquarters' sanction to the program. As I said before, program knowledge is a collective term; and in cataloging the different sources of program knowledge, I realized that each seemed to fit into one of three general categories: organizational guidance, individual qualities, and developed skills.

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDANCE

Organizational guidance is the formal training that the agency gives anyone who will work on the program. This formal training usually begins by having the reviewer read the regulation that gave birth to the program and continually regulates it. Other agency regulations or environmental regulations may also apply, so they will have to be read as well.

Of course, anyone who has ever read a Federal regulation knows how impossible it is to read. Fortunately, the agency will send those members who will work with the program to a special training course on the program. This course will explain and contextualize the regulation and related regulations. After this course, the agency member enters the "real world" of program review. I will talk more about the program knowledge learned through actually doing it in a later section. As far as organizational guidance is concerned, however, the formal training a reviewer will get after he or she starts reviewing is either through written guidance or through an annual environmental conference given by headquarters. Depending on the level of experience of the reviewer, written guidance and these yearly conferences will serve to either build a frame of reference for future work with the program or enhance the program knowledge that already exists.

Organizational guidance may seem simple and hardly worth mentioning, but still it is very important. Formal training is the foundation for program knowledge—it is what everyone will refer to in their mind. Unfortunately, organizational guidance is the first thing to go when the budget is cut. Since it costs to fly people around the country to do nothing more productive than learn, training is a juicy target for budget analysts. This year, for instance, the division was forced to cancel its environmental conference. There are other ways to learn the program, of course, but there is nothing like a good head start.

INDIVIDUAL QUALITIES

The next area of program knowledge that I mapped out had to do with individual qualities. I feel that the study of organizational knowledge is not complete unless we recognize that individuals are different and process information in different ways. Individual qualities affect the perception of data as well as work habits, which in turn affect the work that is done. The two individual qualities that I focused on (and I believe there could be more) are disciplinary background and personality type.

Disciplinary Background. Focusing on disciplinary background comes from the idea that anyone who studies or works in one particular field for a long enough time will adopt a world view that is characteristic of his or her field. Many natural scientists, for instance, will understand the world in terms of empirical reality, whereas political scientists will see the world in terms of political motivations. Kenneth Burke called this phenomenon of seeing the world in a particular way a person's "terministic screen," after an incident where he saw that the same object looked different through different photographic lenses (45).

Both Tom and Bruce exemplified, through their words and actions, their terministic screens. Tom comes from a political science background and so is endlessly aware of the political nature of the agency. For example, Tom is aware that some regions have a "facilitator" relationship with the private companies that they work with and will therefore try to push through measures that are somewhat questionable. Tom takes such political motives into consideration every time he reviews a region's record of approval.

Bruce, on the other hand, is a biologist, and so comes from a science background. Bruce seems to betray his terministic screen when he comes across a difficult measure. He tends to believe that there is a right answer that he is not getting. In this sense he does not quite realize that approving a measure that will possibly reduce harm to the environment is in the realm of the probable and therefore arguable either way. As Tom said to me in a discussion about knowledge, scientists and engineers tend to think that "the answer is in the back of the book." As a result, Bruce seems to place a lot of weight on his own competency. He feels that "making the wrong call" is an almost damnable offense.

In terms of program knowledge, disciplinary background influences the way information is perceived. Bruce, for instance, does not suspect the region's political motives, and consequently sees their mistakes as simple difficulties with the material. In such a political organization, Bruce may benefit by developing a better political sense.

Personality Type. Another individual quality that affects the way information is gathered and perceived is personality type. Jensen and DiTiberio have bridged personality theory with composition, and here I borrow from their work to help fill out my theory of program knowledge. Jensen and DiTiberio take their personality theory from Jung and particularly Myers, who delineate four "bi-polar dimensions:"

- Extraversion—Introversion
- Sensing—Intuition
- Thinking—Feeling
- Judging—Perceiving (286)

I didn't actually administer the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test, but from my own intuition and through their self-assessments, I was able to determine where Tom and Bruce's personalities fell along the lines of these dimensions. I focused on the Extraversion—Introversion and Sensing—Intuition dimensions, because I thought these dimensions were particularly indicative of the respondent's work processes. According to Jensen and DiTiberio, the Extraversion—Introversion dimension "identifies a person's general orientation toward life" (288). Extraverts favor interacting with people, whereas introverts favor reflection. Just as Tom and Bruce differed in their disciplinary orientations, they also differed in this dimension. Tom is an extravert; he prefers talking out his problems (even if they are not all that problematic) and spends much more time on the telephone than Bruce. Bruce, on the other hand, is an introvert, more likely to have things secure in his mind before he speaks. Bruce agreed with this assessment and said that this gives him problems in meetings, particularly with his supervisor, Maureen.

The two respondents also differed in the Sensing—Intuition dimension, which, like disciplinary background, indicates ways of perceiving information. According to Jensen and DiTiberio, sensing types prefer to be "concrete, detail-oriented, and matter of fact, while intuitives are seen as abstract, idea-oriented, and imaginative" (290). Bruce is certainly a sensing type. When he studies a program, he takes extensive notes, taking in as much information as he can. Tom, on the other hand, is more intuitive—he looks hardest at certain areas that he sees as most important.

How do personality types affect the respondents' program knowledge? Since answers to some difficulties may be in the realm of agency collaboration more so than in the actual regulation, Tom seems to have an advantage with his interactive personality. Bruce's sensing preference probably also hinders him to the extent that he does not naturally discriminate between details—a case of not seeing the forest for the trees. At the same time, Bruce's detail-oriented manner of study is certainly important for studying complex programs. When Bruce develops a better sense of discriminating information, his exacting method of study will benefit him tremendously.

Personality and disciplinary backgrounds are both factors that influence how a worker works, but in no way are such dispositions deterministic. Once can develop what one lacks, as well as further develop strengths that he or she naturally has. Supervisors benefit from an understanding of personality types and terministic screens for several reasons: (1) they understand their employees better, (2) they can get a better idea of where an employee can improve, and (3) they can appreciate and utilize the employee's already formed strengths.

DEVELOPED SKILLS

The last area of program knowledge is what I call (for lack of a better buzzword) "developed skills." Developed skills refers to the program knowledge a person gains from doing the job and thús corresponds to a higher level of program knowledge. I divided these developed skills into three areas: knowledge that is gained through experience, knowledge that is "accessed," and influential knowledge.

Experience. In some ways experience is related to organizational guidance, because it refers to knowledge learned through interaction with others in the organization. Knowledge gained through experience, however, is received through informal interaction, not through the formal processes of organizational guidance. A case in point would be the feedback one receives on a particular record of approval. With this kind of interaction comes natural instruction. For instance, even though Bruce tends to scrutinize each program, he has developed a sense of what to look for when beginning to read the program. Also, Bruce's political consciousness has been raised to a certain extent in realizing that private firms will try to use Federal money for increasing their productive capacity, rather than improving the environment. The government will fund a company in order to improve its facilities, but only if the action will limit damage to the environment. When these companies request funding, the agency has to be sure that they are not trying to improve their facilities just to make more money. Through interaction with Maureen and others in the division, Bruce has developed a healthy suspicion of private company funding requests, especially when they could cost the government a lot of money.

It is important to note as well that through experience, employees also learn organizational objectives. Bruce has made some reasonable determinations that were overruled by Maureen because they did not fit what the agency wanted to do. Bruce has said that as an environmentalist he has been frustrated by some of these agency decisions; but whether he agrees with them or not, as his experience increases so will his knowledge of agency prerogatives.

Accessed Knowledge. Sometimes Bruce or Tom will run across a problem or area of knowledge that they have never dealt with before. At this point it is necessary to access knowledge, that is, find some method or person that will furnish the information needed. For this environmental review process, Bruce and Tom will tap information from various sources, including written and empirical sources. The most important source of knowledge, however, is other people.

The world is full of specialists, and if you cannot afford to take a crash course in historical landmark protection, the chances are that there is someone out there who did take that course and can answer your questions. The trick is knowing who to ask. Tom stresses this ability (and this may be another reason why he spends much of his time on the phone). In fact, Tom has such a social constructionist view of knowledge that he believes that, for his job, a scientific background is not necessary. Tom feels that the ability to find people who know the answers and synthesize what they have to say is more important than empirical ability. As a matter of fact, he informed this ethnographer that he could make me "a haz mat (hazardous materials) specialist in a year," which is kind of scary when you think about it.[2]

Influential Knowledge. There is one more element of developed skills that I should mention; and in some ways, this phenomenon may be the most useful. People seem to like new, helpful ideas—ideas that seem to apply to their needs or perhaps give them some sort of advantage. A good way to understand this phenomenon is through analogy. Let us say a football coach is watching Monday Night Football. He or she watches two very good teams and suddenly realizes that one coach is employing a brilliant new innovation. The broadcasters discuss the play for the rest of the evening and show the replay several times. The coach watching at home is enamored by the innovation and envisions his or her own team succeeding with the same innovation.

This new knowledge of football, which we can call "Monday Night Football knowledge," strikes at the heart of knowledge as a social construct. Through media (rhetorical) influence, we suddenly have a bright new idea of how to play football. To put this into a concrete experience, I recall a conversation that I had with Tom about knowledge. As I mentioned earlier, Tom believes that accessing those with knowledge is of key importance. He got this idea from a book he read, Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Another important idea he took from this book was the idea of paradigms, which are essentially modes of thinking. Tom told me, in reference to the regions' political stances, that each region has its own paradigm. Kuhn's book also gave him the idea that scientists and engineers "look for the answer in the back of the book." Apparently, he found many answers in a book of his own. At any rate, Tom's Monday Night Football knowledge has provided him with a useful way to approach his work.

THE DIFFICULTIES WITH REVIEWING THIS PROGRAM

In the entire scheme of the division, this program that Tom and Bruce work on is the lowest priority. It is less time consuming to review than other environmental projects, and it is less likely to be "hung up" in the higher levels of agency review. This is why Tom and Bruce, the two newest members of the division, are assigned the bulk of the programs to review.

This is not to say, however, that reviewing this program is easy. If we measure difficulties in terms of revisions—either Tom's and Bruce's revisions to the regional records of approval or Maureen's revisions to Tom's and Bruce's records—then we find that this low key program does indeed provide difficulties to those who work with it. According to both Tom and Bruce, they revise (and in this sense, I mean turn over or significantly alter the region's determination) at least 25% of the time.

Two areas of difficulty that Tom and Bruce stressed are facility improvements and real estate acquisition. We have already discussed improving a corporation's facilities in order to make them more environmentally sound (the difficulty here being able to tell if the firm requests funding for environmental gain or financial gain). Real estate acquisition is even more difficult for agency staff members to grasp. Private firms may decide that the only way to improve the surrounding environment is to buy up the affected land and move the residents to a more compatible area. The Federal government will help fund these projects. Unfortunately, there are different situations requiring different real estate actions and the regulations guiding these actions are not very clear. The division used to employ a real estate specialist named Jack. Jack's program knowledge of real estate acquisition and relocation assistance was paramount—in fact, he wrote the agency's guidance for handling real estate issues. Unfortunately for the agency, Jack retired in December of 1992 (now he works as a heavily-paid real estate consultant for various firms).

Another difficulty that neither Bruce nor Tom mentioned, but was apparent when I compared the regions' records of approval with the division's records of approval, is the "technical error." By technical error I mean determinations that are not consistent with the actual regulation or previous agency determinations. For example, a region may approve a measure that headquarters only approves "in part" or "on certain conditions." This technical difficulty of not quite understanding what the regulations say the agency should do also affects Tom and Bruce, as we can see from some of Maureen's comments. Maureen's buzzword seems to be "consistency." Many of her marginal comments stressed the question of whether a certain determination was consistent with previous agency decisions.

Maureen's program knowledge of this particular program is incomparable. If you are unwilling to call someone the "primary author" of a regulation because of all the bureaucratic collaboration that goes into writing it, then you could still call Maureen the "primary collaborator." According to Bruce, Maureen "just sees things" that others do not, and this is why she can tell what is or is not consistent. Tom said that Maureen's cognitive level was "at least two levels" above his.

One interesting feature of Maureen's advanced program knowledge is understanding measures in context, which proves to be a difficulty for those with lesser program knowledge. Bruce, for instance, created a reference guide of previously approved and disapproved measures in order to guide Tom and himself when they are struggling over particular measures. Even though this reference guide does help with measures at a certain level of difficulty, it has failed to provide the correct (correct in terms of Maureen's program knowledge) determination in some more difficult cases. The reference guide may indicate that a particular measure has "historical precedent" elsewhere, but Maureen can understand the measure in its own context and thus see how it would or would not fit previous agency decisions.

Of course, there is a level of difficulty that goes beyond Maureen's program knowledge. Real estate difficulty seems to reach this dizzying height the most. When faced with such problems, the only recourse is through collaboration with the legal division, policy division, the regions, and others who could add to the solution. At this point, program knowledge is created through high-level interaction. Later, however, this knowledge may become standard program knowledge, even finding itself in training courses some day.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

I believe that if we understand program knowledge and its role in an employee's success, then not only can we limit the number of mistakes made when reviewing the program (which is certainly a production goal), but we can also understand our employees better, strengthen their weaknesses, and limit their frustrations (all of which should be management goals). I say "limit" purposefully here. I do not pretend that an understanding of program knowledge will cure all professional writing problems. After assessing the difficulties with reviewing the program, it only seemed natural that I should try to develop strategies to overcome these problems. Truthfully, however, I can only provide recommendations for some of the difficulties and for others merely note their existence and reflect on their origins. At any rate, I feel that all of these difficulties (whether fixable or not) can be viewed within the context of program knowledge. The recommendations (and reflections) I have to make concern three main areas: written guidance, experience, and management techniques.

WRITTEN GUIDANCE

As I indicated in the section on difficulties, the problems with reviewing this particular program occur at different levels of difficulty. For the problems of lesser difficulty, I suggest that we turn to the first area of program knowledge, which I called "organizational guidance." As I wrote in that section, there are different kinds of organizational guidance, but here I want to focus on written guidance, because the division can provide written guidance cheaply and without the help of outside parties, such as training consultants.

As Paradis, Dobrin, and Miller point out, "Written messages can be retrieved at will in their exact ordinal form" (289). This permanent quality of written guidance is its greatest asset; it is a reference guide, a storehouse of information. In no stretch of the imagination could you say that this agency overlooks written guidance; however, writing guidance is never a priority. At the time of this writing, Tom had hazardous materials guidance waiting to be finished. Bruce had wetlands guidance to finish, and Maureen had drafts of different guidance topics sitting on her desk waiting to be read. There are no deadlines for guidances, so they can be shelved in a moment's notice. Usually the day-to-day review work takes precedence over writing guidance. The end result of this natural hierarchy, however, is that field workers lack specific guidance–their level of program knowledge becomes much lower; and, as a result, there is greater potential for mistakes.

EXPERIENCE

These recommendations are for Bruce, our introverted biologist, but can apply to anyone. The difficulties that I saw with Bruce and his work with the program seemed to come from his individual qualities, specifically his scientific background, which left him unprepared for the political side of his business. Bruce seemed to have trouble understanding that there were some measures that were not, objectively speaking, right or wrong, but subject to interpretation. Unfortunately, when Bruce made the wrong interpretation he felt as if he simply got the answer wrong; and this shook his confidence in his own intelligence. Certainly there would be times when Bruce misses something, as is natural with anyone. As I have mentioned before, however, there were also times when his interpretations were reasonable but were overturned by Maureen, who, with her interaction with agency policy makers, was more in tune to agency objectives. Unfortunately, this rejection of Bruce's well-thought-out determinations also bruised his intellectual confidence.

It is important for Bruce to understand, first and foremost, the political nature of his organization. He needs to realize that sometimes there are no right or wrong issues, but arguable positions. More importantly, however, Bruce has to realize that his interpretations will almost always carry less weight than those of the people above him. It is the nature of any hierarchy for those below to be frustrated with those above, but this frustration should not signify a lack of intelligence. What Bruce lacks is power.

With experience, Bruce will learn these things. I am not that optimistic to think that by understanding the difficulties he will no longer be frustrated. People have been trying to come up with a cure for that old hierarchy feeling for years now, and it is not an easy sickness to stop (or even relieve). Until Bruce understands the political side of his business, however, he will not even understand the roots of his frustrations.

MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

People tend to expect a lot from management–continually thinking of more things that they can do to make professional lives easier–but this is only because managers seem to have the power to do something about it. Just as in my recommendations to Bruce, my recommendations to Maureen will be mixed with reflections on the absence of solutions. In any case, there are things Maureen can do as Bruce's supervisor that will help him with his difficulties. First, I think that any manager would benefit from understanding the effect that professional background and personality type have on the ways employees process information and make decisions. If an employee seems to be having a particular difficulty with an aspect of the work, a manager should start looking for the answer by seeing if the employee's mind is oriented to the knowledge that is needed to do the work.

Another thing that Maureen–and other managers–can do is soften the hierarchical blow when she revises Bruce's work. Corrections that need to be made should always be made; but, when it seems like Bruce's determination was entirely reasonable, then she should let him know that his thinking is correct but for this reason of policy she needs to go in a different direction.

Again, these strategies are not cure-alls. It will take an enormous amount of sensitivity for managers to keep everyone's possible differences in mind (especially when they may not realize that they exist–how many people *do* know about the Myers-Briggs test?). Moreover, it will take a whole lot of interpersonal skill to let someone down lightly when he or she is not quite in line with agency's objectives. It is easy to fault managers; but, to be fair, we must recognize the constraints on their abilities as well. In Maureen's case, her responsibilities include supervising all division work, writing environmental policy statements for the agency, handling the administrative work for the division, and partaking in various intergovernmental environmental committees. It is hard to blame her for not being up on her Kenneth Burke. To include one last source of frustration, even if Maureen were aware of the causes of her workers' limitations, there may be no way of improving them. Nothing can be more frustrating than watching a person make the same mistakes.

Without trying to sound too fatalistic, there are many problems which cannot be solved. But this is an important conclusion in itself. If your students go into real live workplaces to study writing, then they will soon realize that they are studying people. They may not be as lucky as I was with my respondents—Tom was very amusing and talkative, and Bruce was very helpful and honest—but they will quickly realize that writing does not come from pens or computers but from humans in real live situations. Writing this article, I feel relieved from the consultant's burden of making everything "fixable." I hope, however, that my concept of program knowledge will prove useful for understanding why people make certain decisions or experience certain frustrations. This will be valuable knowledge for me as I proceed with my own career. Chances are your students will find similar benefits from their experience.

NOTES

[1] For this article I decided not to reveal the agency or the names of those who took part in my study. My article has nothing in it that could damage the agency or the division (since I focused on the organizational knowledge of a few employees rather than any heavy political issues), but since I pry into my respondents' work habits and, to a limited degree, their psychology, I felt that it would be best to conceal their names out of respect for their privacy.

[2] It is important to note that introverts will have a natural difficulty in accessing knowledge or "networking." Bruce, the introvert, said that he would call someone when he needed a specific answer, but also said that he regretted not feeling comfortable talking out his ideas (and thus acquiring knowledge) beforehand. What introverts lack in networking skills they usually make up for with critical thinking skills, but it is important for them to know the benefits of accessing knowledge. With effort they will gradually become more comfortable with gathering information from others.

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Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 1

The Effects of Organizational Hierarchy on Collaborative Writing and Ethnographic Research: A Study of a Government Research Laboratory Public Affairs Branch[1]

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The purpose of my limited ethnography at a Government Research Laboratory (GRL) Public Affairs Branch (PAB) located in Washington, D.C., is to study the effects of hierarchical power on collaborative writing. The following study of collaborative writing includes an audience analysis of two aspects of public affairs, external and internal relations.

External media relations mainly included press releases on two topics, award/promotion recipients and new scientific discoveries or developments. Interestingly, almost all of the press releases were recycled and printed in *Labnews*, the lab-wide bi-weekly newspaper. While the content of the press releases remained the same for *Labnews* as for external media, emphasis changed–the press releases focused on *what*, the technology, while the *Labnews* articles focused on *who*, the scientist.

One of the most important components of internal relations is the monthly report. The monthly report was a group effort with each specialist covering his or her area of expertise. The Deputy Public Affairs Officer (DPAO) was responsible for writing an executive summary, assembling and editing the document, and presenting the final version to the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for further input, review, and approval. The monthly report was distributed to those people in the approval chain, culminating in the executive directorate. The monthly report was also disseminated to the division heads who chose whether or not to route the monthly report to the branch level.

Although the press releases were tracked by a clipping service which monitored specialty newspapers as well as large media sources, little follow-up analysis was done by the public affairs branch. On the other hand, the office felt the monthly report was crucial. The DPAO said the monthly report was a matter of "survival"; the monthly report was the sole means to justify the office's existence to those people higher up in the laboratory hierarchy.

In a private public relations firm, getting and keeping many diverse clients is a priority. However, in a government agency, the laboratory in this case, the public affairs office's single client becomes all the more important.

Although maintaining and extending external media relations should be the main objective of all public affairs offices, my study indicates that internal validation of this government public affairs office via the monthly report takes precedence.

COLLABORATIVE WRITING RESEARCH

Collaborative writing in the workplace is a "fact of life" (Ede and Lunsford; Kleinman). According to Ede and Lunsford, two types of collaborative writing occur, horizontal writing–which occurs among peers–and vertical writing–which occurs among unequals–within the hierarchy. In a study entitled "The Reciprocal Relationship of Workplace Culture and Review," Susan Kleinman identifies two areas for further research which are the basis of my ethnography:

- descriptive studies that focus on workplace processes in organizations
- studies that focus on individual processes within organizations.

In my ethnographic study, collaborative efforts at the organizational level are illuminated by case studies which reveal workplace writing values.

ORGANIZATIONAL HIERARCHY OF A GOVERNMENT RESEARCH LABORATORY (GRL)

The Government Research Laboratory (GRL) I studied is located in Washington, D.C., and is a U.S. military multi-disciplinary scientific research laboratory. Established in 1923, GRL now employs more than 5,000 government and contract workers under seven directorates composed of several hundred employees each :

- Executive Directorate
- Business and Operations Directorate
- General Science and Technology Directorate
- Warfare and Systems and Sensors Research Directorate
- Materials and Science and Component Technology Directorate
- [A specific] Science and Technology Directorate
- The [Service] Center for Space Technology

Each GRL directorate is composed of divisions consisting of a few hundred employees each. For example, the Executive Directorate has one division called the Command Support Division (CSD), of which the public affairs office is a branch. Each branch, ranging from ten to fifty employees, is further broken down into sections of one to ten people.

In relation to other GRL branches, the public affairs branch is small. This public affairs branch has twelve employees and two sections, media relations and the sole historian, Dr. Kiln. The media relations component (involving eleven employees) includes

- the lab-wide newspaper, *Labnews*
- the lab-wide advertiser, *Billboard*
- the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Office
- the GRL Television Network (GTN)

EVOLUTION OF THE GOVERNMENT RESEARCH LABORATORY (GRL) PUBLIC AFFAIRS BRANCH

In the 1940's the Technical Information Division (TID) was created to maintain documentation, to make graphics for reports, and to serve as an information source for the laboratory. In 1948 or 1949, the public affairs branch was created within this division. At first, the public affairs branch was an in-house record-keeping activity which maintained a low profile because of the sensitive nature of the scientific research being done at the time. Up until 1980-1982, the laboratory maintained a low profile not only because of the research being done but because the people in management were conservative. From the 1940s to the 1970s, the laboratory did not have the competition that it does now.

In the 1980s, about the same time that the laboratory started gaining greater visibility, Jake Gelston came on board as the public affairs officer (PAO). At this time, GRL management began to include the public affairs branch in decision-making processes, gave them "heads ups," and got them involved with issues. By the early 1990s the GRL public affairs branch had become an important decision and policy maker which reflects the office's autonomy.

According to PAO Jake Gelston, "free reign" over internal and external relations has coincided with the reorganization of the laboratory. The public affairs branch has moved from the Technical Information Division (TID) to the Command Support Division (CSD). As part of CSD, the public affairs branch is now officially part of the GRL management team, placing it higher up in the GRL hierarchy. However, this power places the office in a precarious position. As PAO Jake Gelston says, "You can't get cocky. If you mess up, it's usually big time. The whole world knows about it."

A PORTRAIT OF THE GRL PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER (PAO)

> "If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, then we did it. If anything goes real good, then you did it."
>
> —Bear Bryant

A plaque with this Bear Bryant quotation hangs on the wall opposite the desk of GRL PAO Jake Gelston's desk and stands for his professional credo. According to PAO Jake Gelston, he worked his way up the GRL ladder of success from being a machinist's apprentice in 1959 to PAO by the early 1980s. PAO Jake Gelston has self admittedly learned his lessons from the school of hard knocks and so he values quality and accuracy most.

PAO JAKE GELSTON'S OFFICE AS A SYMBOL OF ORGANIZATION

The public affairs branch morning staff meeting occurs at about 9:00 a.m. in PAO Jake Gelston's office. Jake Gelston's organized office epitomizes the meticulous methodology with which every task is approached. Behind Jake Gelston's desk is a dry-erase priority task board with the following main headings:

- priority
- task
- cognizant personnel
- status
- targeted completion date

The priority task board serves as a tracking device for press releases in progress. For example, some press releases are "working" and some are "in the (approval) chain."

Next to Jake Gelston's priority task board is his huge government-issue wall calendar. Jake Gelston fills in important events on the calendar in black pen and circles the most important events in yellow highlighter. Annual leave and sick leave for each public affairs branch employee is also tracked on this calendar. On his desk, Jake Gelston has folders or large binders for each issue divided into tabbed sections. Folders for smaller topics have key words on important issues, dates, and names written in black ink on the front cover. Important notations are circled in yellow highlighter. Jake Gelston also keeps his daily appointment calendar and writes down what he does each day. He has been doing this for twelve years.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES AFFECTING PUBLIC AFFAIRS BRANCH STAFF

In the first staff meeting I attended, PAO Jake Gelston stressed that the office's tasks are more organized than when I worked with the public affairs branch in 1988-1990. Each worker now has a definitive beat. Recently, the public affairs branch separated from TID, and they prepared their first line-by-line budget for FY-93 (fiscal year 1993). This means that the office has better developed plans, more autonomy, and knows in advance what pro-active activities will take place. Lay-out and design of *Labnews* is done on *PageMaker*, saving time and making the office more "high tech." The outmoded UniSystem network computers have been replaced with IBM's equipped with *WordPerfect*.

GRL's new base commander, Captain Gains, is more pro-active than past captains. At GRL, the tour of duty for the average captain is one to three years, and some captains are promoted after their time at GRL. Captain Gains hopes to change public opinion of the [service] by promoting environmental, health, and human applications of R&D (Research and Development) projects. Furthermore, the captain's sister is a producer of *Good Morning America*; and recently she got the laboratory a six- minute spot on the show highlighting high temperature superconductors (HTS), synthetic blood work, and industrial diamonds made from sewer gas.

Captain Gains has also personally contacted Kathleen Matthews of *Working Woman* about doing a segment on GRL women. Recently, Public Affairs Specialist (PAS) Dana Mack spent a week gathering names, biographies, and pictures so that a package of material could be sent to

Kathleen Matthews. When asked why the captain is so interested in GRL's image, PAO Jake Gelston offers two answers:

- Department of Defense (DoD) cutbacks have jeopardized the laboratory's stability, and positive media will enhance public perceptions of government and GRL work.
- The captain wants to be promoted.

THE ATMOSPHERE AND PRIORITIES OF THE DAILY GRL PUBLIC AFFAIRS BRANCH STAFF MEETING

The daily GRL public affairs branch staff meeting is a time of casual information exchange and status reports on pending tasks. Several times during each half hour meeting PAO Jake Gelston would stop and explain a term for me or bring me up to speed on the topics discussed. Only Public Affairs Specialists (PAS) and the historian attend the morning meetings:

- Deputy Public Affairs Officer (DPAO) Donald Bates
- PAS Dana Mack
- PAS Jane Sanchez
- Historian Dr. Kiln

The dress code of the GRL public affairs staff is casual. For instance, PAS Dana Mack often wears slacks and a nice blouse while DPAO Donald Bates will wear khakis and a sweater. PAO Jake Gelston often wears a suit and tie because he regularly meets with upper management, but even he wore jeans and a t-shirt when he was to visit a remote GRL work site.

For the most part, the public affairs staff does not meet with outside media. They set up interviews, give tours, and escort special visitors; but their one-on-one contact with external media is limited. As PAO Jake Gelston says, 99% of the office's phone calls are from laboratory personnel who have questions or requests.

The atmosphere of the meeting is reflective of the relaxed and jovial attitude of the workers. When I told DPAO Donald Bates that I would be observing the public affairs branch for a project on professional writing, he joked, "Does this mean we have to do actual work?"

During the meetings, PAO Jake Gelston will begin by telling about tasks that he has been working on. Next, he will move on to media alerts. When the media contact his office about getting an interview or information, the staff member who fields the call will write up a media alert which tells the internal staff who has called and for what purpose. PAO Jake Gelston receives information from each of the staff and divides up other tasks that are on the burner.

Often during staff meetings, PAO Jake Gelston will use a specific example to generalize about public affairs practices. For instance, a reporter faxed a letter to a PAS, but was vague about the nature of the requested interview. PAO Jake Gelston was suspect about the reporter's tactics, and he warned his staff about intentional vagueness. PAO Jake Gelston asked the PAS to find out "What does the reporter really want?"

During this particular meeting, we viewed a VCR tape by space systems scientists sent over for review as part of the approval chain; and it spawned an impromptu audience analysis. The video presented space hardware in a very technical manner. After the viewing, PAS Jane Sanchez opened up conversation by asking, "Who was this video made for anyway?" All of the staff agreed that the video had probably been made for a single update meeting.

DPAO Donald Bates did an impromptu audience analysis on the space systems video which demonstrates how different public affairs writing is from scientific writing. He said that the video began with hardware, applications, data-gathering methods, and ended with broad applications and funny credits. If the public affairs branch had done the film, they would have concentrated on applications first and then briefly described hardware and software. According to DPAO Donald Bates, the broad applications (ionosphere composition, thermodynamics of ionosphere, space weather, long term changes in the environment, and global warming) seemed incongruent with the technical jargon of the film. PAO Jake Gelston suggested that the funny credits (i.e., moral support...vending machines) be taken out since they detracted from the technical quality of the film.

GRL PUBLIC AFFAIRS EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS EFFORTS

The main writing tasks for external and internal affairs of the GRL public affairs branch are:

- the monthly report
- press releases (and research trends)
- *Labnews*
- media alerts/public statements (usually on interviews or mergers)
- script writing for the new "politically correct and Clintonesque" GRL film
- memos for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests
- *Billboard*
- internal memos

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: HOW AND TO WHOM ARE PRESS RELEASES WRITTEN?

External media relations mainly consisted of press releases which were recycled in *Labnews* and are written on two topics:

- new scientific technologies or discoveries (what)
- award/promotion recipients (who)

According to the GRL public affairs branch self-audit, during FY-92 they completed 106 press releases, down from 128 press releases in FY-91. The public affairs staff was reduced by two people who were not replaced in FY-92 who averaged a total of 35 releases per year.

In GRL's public affairs branch, as with all government agencies, quantity is valorized in an effort to meet quotas. Also, personnel are evaluated for promotion based on quantity of press releases completed. Furthermore, the chronological filing and record-keeping system of press releases reflects the quantifiable values of the office.

A look at the press release log shows that PAS Jane Sanchez typically does most press releases. PAS Dana Mack remarked, "Her beats are the most fertile now." During the time of my ethnography, the following subjects were being covered as press release material:

- dedication of the lunar camera to the Air and Space Museum
- development of an infra-red imaging system
- hazardous waste site clean-up with new technology
- fiber optic sensing of metals
- Dr. Oliver, APS Fellow
- internship opportunities
- high temperature superconductors (HTS)

Subjects for press releases come from many sources, including the following:

- reports and journal articles reviewed by the public affairs branch as part of the approval chain
- division or branch heads who suggest interesting projects
- calls to the different divisions to see what is happening
- correspondence files

The problem with generating sources for press releases is that there really is no set system for the public affairs staff; but, on the other hand, news gathering never has been systematic. However, many times popular subjects, such as HTS or space systems, and popular people, such as the Nobel Laureate, seem to get media attention over and over again. Occasionally, a reporter will call and inquire about a subject and the public affairs staff will write their own release on the subject. In my research, the public affairs staff seems more reactive than pro-active when writing press releases. They rarely address subjects or people unknown to them, and they keep press release records chronologically rather than by subject.

One problem with the methodology of the public affairs staff in terms of press releases and answers to media queries is that they do not file up-to-date information on hot subjects. For instance, Disney's Epcot Center contacted GRL after seeing the *Good Morning America* segment on GRL and wanted general information on high tech projects, especially computer modeling and robotics projects that they might incorporate into displays. PAS Jane Sanchez had difficulty gathering data in time to meet the deadlines of the inquiry because:

- no information was at hand
- each division, branch, or specialist had to be contacted and asked for "layman" information

- those contacted did not respond in a timely manner

The vagueness of Epcot's request leaves a lot of room for interpretation, and PAS Jane Sanchez did not know what exactly the Epcot people were looking for. Finally, PAS Jane Sanchez had many questions:

- Did Epcot ask other places for information?
- What were they really interested in?
- How crucial was their one week deadline?
- Did Epcot want generalized, specialized, or theoretical information?

One of my questions during this study was "Why is information gathering such a difficult task?" Each of the topics which Epcot mentioned in their letter was a hot topic. Why aren't there hot topic files?

My questions on how media responses and press releases are written leads me to question the theoretical methodologies governing this office's operation. These methodologies can be clearly seen when we see how a typical news release is initiated, researched, written, re-written, and, finally, sent out for distribution.

CASE STUDY OF PRESS RELEASE WRITING AND DISTRIBUTION

Although DPAO Donald Bates does not write the bulk of the press releases for the office, he was the only one actively writing press releases at the time of my study. Furthermore, DPAO Donald Bates is the only press release writer who keeps comprehensive folders of rough drafts and information on each release.

For our purposes, we will track a press release on a new scientific advancement since they are more complicated to write than those on scientists who receive awards. Press Release 92-92R is entitled "New Instrumentation to Locate and Identify Buried Explosive Ordnance and Detect Hazardous Waste."

In an interview, DPAO Donald Bates said he came upon the subject of this release in an unusual manner. He happened to be reading through newspaper articles which had been clipped by the clipping service, and he came upon a story with the same title he has used for his release. He then contacted Dr. Davies, the principal investigator, and found that the article he had read was in error. Dr. Davies was interested in creating a press release so that accurate information could be made available to the media.

From the time DPAO Donald Bates contacted Dr. Davies to the time he had finished a first draft of the release, about a week or a week and a half had elapsed. During this time, DPAO Donald Bates reviewed a technical paper entitled "Magnometer Imaging of Hazardous Waste Sites" and a final report entitled "Magnometry and Radar Evaluation of Toxic and Hazardous Waste Sites at the Sandia Laboratory" from which he "lifted" sections on applications of the technology for use in his press release.

As DPAO Donald Bates commented, "If you use their language, then you reduce the chances of being technically incorrect." Like all of the PAS's in GRL's public affairs branch, DPAO Donald Bates has a mass communications/technical writing background, not a science background, so understanding the intricacies of such variegated scientific endeavors can pose a problem.

Next, the rough draft is seen by the principal investigator. A few years ago, DPAO Donald Bates would let PAO Jake Gelston review his releases for accuracy and style. However, he found that PAO Jake Gelston went through so many "stylistic" revisions of the two-page document that by the time the principal investigator reviewed it there were still scientific errors. Now he lets the principal investigator read it for scientific accuracy and then he lets PAO Jake Gelston correct stylistic problems. This principal investigator read and approved the release within three days.

PAO Jake Gelston made more than fifteen sets of changes on DPAO Donald Bate's revisions. Most of the revisions were redundant, word choices, and organization; and they had already been thrown away by DPAO Donald Bates.

PAO Jake Gelston likes acronyms to be identified, people to be acknowledged, and activities to be attributed. A survey of many of PAO Jake Gelston's changes show that he favors use of transitional phrases to indicate logical ordering and relative time frames. In fact, PAO Jake Gelston favors certain verbs so much that they appear in almost all of the press releases which I reviewed:

- characterize
- evaluate
- demonstrate
- report

A more comprehensive review of GRL press releases in draft versus final form would uncover many of Jake Gelston's preferences and make staff rewrites a less exhaustive task.

Due to exhaustive vertical collaboration, the press releases, no matter who has written them, all end up rewritten by PAO Jake Gelston. In fact, extensive rewriting is possible because there are no time limits, deadlines, or financial constraints. Unlimited time and money leads to unlimited changes.

When DPAO Donald Bates selected external media sources for distribution, he used three outlets:

- [Service Information Office]
- wire service
- pre-existing list on which he checked off appropriate media

After sending out the press releases, the public affairs branch does not track the media's responses. The clipping service scans newspapers and specialty journals for mentions of GRL, but they are not aware of the nature or content of the press releases which are sent out. PAS Dana Mack knows that the clipping service misses a lot of the media coverage because it does not scan smaller specialty newsletters which would cover GRL news.

Once the clippings are sent to the public affairs branch, they are xeroxed as an appendix for the monthly report and then they are filed away. The public affairs branch does not have the time or personnel to read each and every story; and, frankly, there is little interest in doing so. Only big stories and news features are of interest to the public affairs staff. The staff has little interest in which releases are picked up by which media in what ways. However, the staff is aware that technologies with environmental applications are a hot topic, especially with the "politically correct Clintonesque" era currently reigning.

External Media: Recycling Press Releases for *Labnews*

Almost all of the press releases done by public affairs staff are recycled for *Labnews*, the bi-weekly lab-wide newspaper. *Labnews* has a distribution of 6,700, with about 1400 retirees and other organizations and people on the mailing list. 70% of the 1400 off-base subscribers are retirees and 30% are colleges, government agencies, and other institutions and people. Those retirees, unlike government employees, are powerful because they are not affected by Hatch Laws which prohibit government workers from lobbying for elected officials, etc.

Labnews was created in the 1940's and was "folksy" and "social," says PAO Jake Gelston. The newspaper was filled with gossip–who had arrived, who was getting married, who was seen with whom strolling down the main drive. Now, PAO Jake Gelston describes the publication as "positive" and as a "corporate style newsletter." No controversial material is put into the newspaper. As PAO Jake Gelston says, this sometimes gives the newspaper a flat style which may bore some non-technical readers. He thinks that not all of the lab reads it–only the more scientific people. However, he laughed as he said that *Billboard*, GRL's version of the *Home Shopping Club*, has a much higher readership.

The press releases become stories in *Labnews* and are printed with very few changes. However, as DPAO Donald Bates points out, people are more important than the technology for the lab-wide newspaper. Sometimes he adds more names and puts them in before describing the technology. Often, a photo will be included which shows the principal investigators in their laboratory.

Internal Affairs: How and to Whom is the Monthly Report Written?

The monthly report is a status and event report written by the GRL public affairs branch for the high level managers of the executive directorate. The first monthly reports were written in 1971 as a result of an unflattering audit–the office was requested to write and distribute a monthly report because they had no "corporate memory."

Now, PAO Jake Gelston thinks the monthly report is the crucial tool to substantiate the public affairs branch's existence to the GRL top brass for three reasons:

- The public affairs branch, located in building 200, is separated physically from the executive directorate, located in building 43.
- When the base commander's office sees PAO Jake Gelston in building 43, they immediately think he is the bearer of bad news --the monthly report highlights positive and pro-active media efforts.
- The monthly report is the only information source on media contacts, inquiries, etc.

As DPAO Donald Bates says, the monthly report is a matter of "survival" for the GRL public affairs branch. In terms of peer public affairs offices in other government agencies, the GRL public affairs branch is large. While GRL staffs 12 personnel, many peer offices operate with half the staff. However, as DPAO Donald Bates points out, everyone is busy and each person specializes in certain areas. For this reason, each specialist writes his or her own section of the monthly report, which is divided into the following areas:

- Executive Summary
- Media Relations
    - Press Releases
    - Media Contacts
- Public Relations
    - Public Inquiries
    - Contractor Clearances
    - GRL Papers Reviewed
    - Exhibits
        - ' Exhibit Development
        - Exhibitions Attended
        - Upcoming Exhibitions
    - History Office
        - Reference and Historical Requests
        - Oral History
        - Historical Research and Writing
    - Community Relations
    - Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
    - Auditorium Support
    - GRL Science Lounge
    - Miscellaneous/Special Tasks
    - Letter(s) of Appreciation
- Appendix of News Clippings

The monthly report is re-written, edited, and collated by DPAO Donald Bates by editing the previous month's document on the computer and "filling in" the new information. The report begins routing through the approval chain during the second week of the following month. The document takes about one month to complete its routing to its final destination. During the routing time, PAO Jake Gelston tracks down the document to make sure it keeps moving and does not get stuck on someone's desk. Additional copies of the monthly report are sent to division offices which then decide whether or not to route the monthly report to the branch level. According to PAO Jake Gelston, the monthly report spawns friendly competition between divisions in terms of the number of releases on certain technologies and individuals.

The monthly report is not a document which is meant to be read from cover to cover. Instead, each section has colorful tabs so that specific information can be seen at a glimpse. PAO Jake Gelston knows that the monthly report is "read" because it is reflected in the knowledge of the top brass who would not otherwise know certain information. Often, the top brass will write a comment (i.e., "see page 6") to the next person on the routing. Every once in while, PAO Jake Gelston canvasses the division heads to see if they want to receive the monthly report. All but one or two wanted to continue receiving the material.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE GRL PUBLIC AFFAIRS BRANCH'S COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

PAO Jake Gelston describes the public affairs branch as being a "high visibility office." Each PAS has one-on-one relationships with hundreds of people at the laboratory. Each PAS specialist has a vast knowledge of on-going projects, the scientists who work on them, and the relationships among people in the different directorates. However, from my experience of the office and from my research into their media coverage, I think that the public affairs branch interacts with a lot of the same people over and over again. Perhaps a questionnaire or an advertisement in *Labnews* asking people about research and innovative scientists would provide new sources for media coverage.

PAO Jake Gelston joined GRL in 1959 and he worked his way up the ladder of GRL success. PAO Jake Gelston thinks that the GRL public affairs branch works on a "corporate memory" since personnel are not easily replaceable. According to PAO Jake Gelston, an outsider who might replace him would spend three years learning the ropes (the issues, the people, and the operations). In fact, when the public affairs branch hires people, they usually hire GRL or government personnel from other offices, especially from technical editing, photographic services, and other support staff groups. Although PAO Jake Gelston may be overestimating personnel replaceability, this GRL office is highly specific. The average number of years of work experience at GRL for the public affairs branch (excluding the secretary) is 9.5 years.

Unlike a private public relations consulting firm, the GRL public affairs branch must serve the needs of its single client, the laboratory. My study shows that internal validation of the GRL public affairs branch via the monthly report takes precedence over external media relations tools such as press releases. More work needs to be done to compare workplace writing in private firms and government agencies.

NOTES

[1] All names have been changed in this ethnography.

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Volume 28, Number 1

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Frostburg State University
Frostburg, Maryland 21532-1099

Maryland Showcase for Young Writers

This showcase features the writing of young people in the fourth and sixth grades. The writing was submitted by Carol Peck who teaches poetry throughout the State, Mary Ellen Wing who teaches at Cabin John Middle in Potomac, and Billie Lynne Roberts from Worton Elementary near Chestertown.

Carter Ray, Grade 6

SPEAKING FOR SOMETHING ELSE

I am very old, older than life;
I am thinking about what the earth looks like
at the surface;
I am feeling the loneliness of being alone;
I love being safe and secure;
I hate earthquakes -- they are uncomfortable;
I complain to myself that I am bored;
My dream is to be dug up and polished
So everyone can see
what a diamond looks like.

Bryan Laurenson, Grade 6

TURQUOISE

Turquoise is the sound of dolphins jumping
into the cool water.
It smells like cold ice floating in a glass.
It tastes like a cool splash of mint.
Turquoise feels as smooth as leather.
It feels warm and joyous inside.
It looks like the ocean
which I cast my eyes on.

Turquoise moves like the calm waves
beating on the sandy ground.

Jonathan B. Hecht, Grade 6

Opinion On The National Anthem

The U.S. national anthem is a big topic in America today. Some people send in letters to Congress each year to change the anthem because it is hard to sing and talks about war. But, some people think the "Star-Spangled Banner" should stay our national anthem because it's been our song for so many years now. In my opinion, it should be changed.

I think the U.S. national anthem should be easy for anyone to sing. Ours isn't. The melody is difficult even for an opera singer. The lyrics are words that everyday people don't use anymore and the grammar is complicated. If you take young children or teenagers and ask them to sing the song, very few will be able to sing it well, if at all. The kids that will do a good job will have to have a high voice.

Another reason for changing the national anthem is that it talks about war. It was written during the War of 1812 when the British were threatening Fort McHenry in Baltimore. It was natural to want a song of glory then, but now even the Cold War is over and we should think about peaceful things. This is a beautiful country, and when we see the awful things going on in Bosnia and Somalia we should be thankful that we have a peaceful and free land.

Some people think that the "Star-Spangled Banner" was our national anthem since the War of 1812. This is not true. It became our national anthem after President Herbert Hoover signed a bill into law on March 3, 1931. Therefore, it isn't even as old as baseball.

I have a plan to allow us to adopt a new national anthem. My idea is to have a contest. Everyone would have one month to submit a new national anthem. It could be any kind of music: rap, pop, reggae, classical, rock, soul or jazz. It would have to be respectful and patriotic.

Judges would be selected by their knowledge of music and would narrow down the number to 13, representing the original 13 colonies. Then for 2 months there would be continuous playing of the songs on a national radio station so that people all over the country could hear. During the 2 months, there would be debates about the songs. Each composer would tell why his or her song would be best as a national anthem. After this time, there would be a national concert conducted in front of the Washington Monument and televised on network television. Following the concert, there would be a general election to select the new national anthem.

In this way the people of the country can select their favorite song as the anthem and not leave it up to the President only.

Karen Smith, Grade 6

RASPBERRY AND I

As I ride my horse across the sand,
The ocean cries and hangs its head.
We gallop faster and faster.
The wind blows across the sand.
My horse gives off a little neigh,
As we ride farther and farther.
Hooray!
Hooray!

The wind blows through Raspberry's mane.
She lifts her head
So proudly,
So vain,
As we ride farther and farther.
Hooray!
Hooray!

Kristen Sullivan, Grade 6

THE FEELING OF BEING ON TOP OF A HORSE

It looks like being on top of a small,
skinny mountain;
It feels like hard, steel muscles
moving under you;
It smells like hay, oats, the barn
and manure, mixed together;
It moves with the swift rhythm of a canter;
It sounds like soft drums playing
right next to you;
It is like a horse, pitch black
with white points;
It tastes like smog-covered ice, whipping you
until you open your mouth and let it in;
The reins feel cold and harsh in your hands,
Your fingers so numb;

You feel happy for being up there,
Sorrowful because you know
it will come to an end soon,
And fearful in case you fall.

Catherine Mayer, Grade 6

Girls

Girls can be doctors
Girls can be lawyers
Girls can be pilots
Girls can be authors
GIRLS CAN BE ANYTHING THEY CHOOSE

Girls can be Hispanic
Girls can be African
Girls can be different colors
Girls can wear dresses
Girls can wear pants
Girls can have short hair
Girls can have long hair
GIRLS CAN WEAR ANYTHING THEY CHOOSE

Girls can have choices
Girls can have rights
Girls can have fights
Girls can have sayings
GIRLS SHOULD HAVE CHOICES
GIRLS SHOULD HAVE RIGHTS
GIRLS SHOULD HAVE FIGHTS
GIRLS SHOULD HAVE SAYINGS
GIRLS SHOULD HAVE ANY OF THESE THINGS

Girls are as important as animals
Girls are as important as sports
Girls are as important as boys
GIRLS ARE AS IMPORTANT AS EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE WORLD

Treat girls as your idols
Treat girls as your guardian angels
TREAT GIRLS AS YOUR EQUALS

Anne Davis*, Grade 6

GO INSIDE A BOOK

Go inside a book
Lying on the shelf
Collecting dust.
Pick up the book
And dust it off,
Read the title
And smile.

Open to the first page
Of this magnificently old collection,
Listen to the words of sentences,
Paragraphs,
Pages,
Chapters,
Listen to what they say--
They tell you a story.

Drift off into a reverie--
When you awaken,
You're inside!
Look around you,
See armies of letters
Marching in alphabetical order,
Hear the upper case letters telling
young lower case letters
stories of the unknown.

Let your imagination run wild--
Dragons,
Fairies,
Elves,
And magic!
Princes,
Knights,
And queens!
Smell fresh blackbird pie
And porridge of three bears;
Taste Miss Muffet's curds and whey!
And hear the call of the wild.

* Anne Davis was killed by a drunk driver in late fall 1993

Meghan Gloyd, Grade 4

OUT OF WORK – WORKING IT OUT

One Wednesday afternoon in March, Elizabeth and Daniel were at school, working hard as usual. Elizabeth was in fourth grade and was working on her math. Daniel was in second grade and was doing his reading work. Their mom, Ann, was a school teacher and was busy teaching her students. Then, finally the bell rang! It was three o'clock. Elizabeth and Daniel sat by each other on the bus ride home and talked about their day.

When they got home, their dad, Al, was there. "This is very strange," said Daniel. Their Dad was normally at work.

Then Elizabeth said, "Dad, why are you home so early?"

Al said, "Today I got laid off my job."

The kids asked, "What does that mean?"

"That means the place where I work doesn't have enough money to pay me to work for them," said Al sadly.

Together the kids said, "Dad, that's too bad. We're worried."

"I'm a little worried myself, guys," said Al.

"I'm not a guy, Dad! I'm a girl," argued Elizabeth.

"Be quiet!" said Al.

"NO."

"Go to your room now, Elizabeth!" commanded Al.

"Man, I wish Mom was home!" said Elizabeth and Daniel.

"Elizabeth, come down here this minute!" called Al.

"OK!" yelled Elizabeth. "Stay here, Daniel. I'll be up in a minute," she said quietly. "What, Dad?" asked Elizabeth.

"I'm sorry. I lost my temper with you," said Al.

"I'm sorry, too, Dad," said Elizabeth.

"Hi," called Mom. Then she saw Al and asked, "Why are you home so early?"

Al said, "I got laid off."

"What!" said Ann in shock.

The kids saw Mom's face and asked, "Are you O.K.?"

Their mom's response was, "Yes, I 'm O.K."

Elizabeth said, "I'm very glad to see you because Daniel and I are very worried and you can help us calm down."

"O.K.," said Mom. Then Daniel, Mom, and Elizabeth talked to Dad. They all said, "We will work on finding you a new job. Together we can work it out."

On Saturday, they all got to work trying to find Al a job. Elizabeth was reading the newspaper. "Hey, there's a few garden centers nearby. What do you know about Tideland Gardens, Garden Treasures, and Speakman's Nursery?" she asked.

Al answered, "Tideland had to lay off two people. Maybe I'll call Garden Treasures."

"I'll tell you the number," said Daniel.

Al called. "They only have a part-time opening, but I'll go down and check it out," said Al.

"Let's all go together!" suggested Elizabeth.

They all got in the car and headed to Somtown. Ann's car was acting up a little. Daniel said, "Hey, let's stop at McDonald's. They have a playground and everything. I want a Happy Meal, with a toy."

"Oh, be quiet, Daniel. We're looking for a job to make money, not spend it!" said Elizabeth.

"Kids, calm down. I'm trying to drive," said Ann.

"Can't you see the car is acting up? You two cut it out!" said Al nervously.

They finally got to Garden Treasures. The kids looked around and made Ann nervous by touching everything. Then Daniel found a pen. They started to argue. Just then Al appeared.

"I can come here once a week!" he said.

"Yea! A good start!" the family cheered. "Now we'll go to McDonald's."

When the family got home, they talked to their neighbors. Elizabeth and Daniel got on their bikes and rode up the street. They saw Mr. Troy loading up his truck.

"Hi! What are you doing?" They asked him.

"I'm getting ready to build a new house in our neighborhood," he answered.

"Do you need any help?" they asked.

"You're too little to help, but thanks, guys," he said.

"But Dad could help! He needs a job. He's good with lumber, too. He used to help his dad build houses!" said Elizabeth excitedly.

"Great! I'll call him," said Mr. Troy. "Thanks, kids."

But they were already halfway home, racing to tell Al the good news.

It turned out the construction job would pay less, but it would keep Al busy until he found a real job. So the family continued to look for more available jobs. Months passed.

Elizabeth, Daniel, Ann, and Al had to cut back on spending. Christmas was coming and guess what the kids wanted? "We want Nintendo," said Elizabeth.

"And a TV and a VCR and our own stereo, and a ping-pong table and ..." added Daniel.

"Wait a second, kids," said Ann. "Let's have a family meeting. Money is tight now. Let's pick one gift for the family."

After much commotion, they picked a ping-pong table. The cars continued to act up and the family had to buy some new tires for Ann's car for Christmas. Al's car got the nickname "Little Smoke-smoke" because it smoked for the first fifteen minutes every time they drove it.

The tight budget helped make the family tighter. They spent lots of time together–playing games and talking. One night as usual, Daniel said "I'm bored. Let's watch TV."

"No, Daniel. Let's play a game or read a book or clean your room," said Ann.

"A game, definitely," said Daniel.

Elizabeth suggested, "How about Monopoly or Pictionary? How about checkers or cards?"

"How about learning a new game?" asked Al.

"Let's try chess," said Ann. Then they worked on learning how to move the pieces and had lots of fun.

"This is too complicated," said Daniel. "Let's hike in the woods tomorrow instead." And they did.

Finally, one Saturday morning when the family was job-hunting, Elizabeth spotted an ad in the paper.

"Hey! Speakman's Nursery is looking for help, full time. Let's go!" she said.

Al called and he got the job!

"This calls for a celebration," said Daniel. "Let's party. We need junk food, punch, and soda!"

"And wine," said Ann. "I'll call everyone." (She loved to talk on the phone.)

So everyone came over and partied all afternoon and into the night. As they cleaned up, Elizabeth said, "See. We worked together and it all worked out!"

Chaye Parker, Grade 6

FEELINGS ALIVE

When I am angry
I am like a punching bag being punched;

When I am embarrassed
I am like a colored shirt losing its color
in the washing machine;

When I am mischievous
I am like a sly fox getting ready
to attack its prey;

When I am confused
I am like one person reading
a million road signs at one time;

When I am depressed
I am like an ant right in the shadow
of someone's foot
before getting stepped on;

When I am annoyed
I am like a pencil getting ready
to be broken in a pencil fight;

When I am vengeful
I am like a bucket of water
putting out a fire;

When I am all of these
I am like a wall with many paintings.

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Maryland English Journal

Published by the Maryland Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts
The State Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English

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Editorial Office
Department of English
Frostburg State University
Frostburg, Maryland 21532-1099

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Maryland English Journal

Maryland Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts
The State Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English

Volume 28, Number 2 Spring 1994

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MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

Manuscripts submitted to ***Maryland English Journal*** must conform to the following standards:

1. Manuscripts must be typed double-spaced, including quotations and works cited. Length should not exceed 15 to 20 pages.
2. Manuscripts must include an abstract of 75 to 150 words.
3. Manuscripts must include a cover sheet containing the title, name and instructional affiliation of the author(s), date of submission, and other professional or biographical data to be noted in the journal.
4. The first page of text must include the title of the manuscript but not the name(s) and instructional affiliation(s) of the author(s). Manuscripts should be free of internal references to author identity.

STYLE

The content, organization, and style of manuscripts must follow the current MLA citation system (please use the month or season as well as the year in citing journals) and the NCTE *Guidelines for Nonsexist Use of Language*. Authors using computers should avoid special type (bold, italic, etc.) and use left justification only.

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1. Submit *four* copies of the manuscript on 8½ × 11-inch white paper with at least one-inch margins on all sides. Retain a file copy.
2. Include three unaddressed envelopes with sufficient postage for mailing to three associate editor referees; do not attach the stamps to the envelopes. Include two self-addressed stamped envelopes for communications from the editor.
3. Submit manuscripts on computer disks if at all possible; ***MEJ*** uses a desktop publishing system which reads most popular IBM-based word processors.
4. Submit only completed manuscripts.
5. Send manuscripts to the editor, ***Maryland English Journal***, at the address below. The ***Journal*** welcomes submissions at any time. However, in order to expedite the first issues under this editorship, submissions are particularly invited by **September 10, 1994.**

REVIEW PROCESS

Associate editors review blind submissions, a process that can take up to three months. Accepted manuscripts may need to be edited for clarity, organization, language, or style. Published authors will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their submission appears.

Maryland English Journal is published by the Maryland Council of Teachers of English/ Language Arts. Editorial offices are located at Frostburg State University. Membership in MCTELA is $15.00 a year and includes the ***Journal***. Subscription price for institutions is $25.00 a year. Single copies of the ***Journal*** are $5.00. Send articles and other submissions to be considered for publication, as well as correspondence about circulation and advertising, to the editor, Department of English, Frostburg State University, Frostburg, Maryland 21532-1099. Views expressed and content of articles are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or beliefs of MCTELA.

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From the Editor's Desk

FROSTBURG
STATE UNIVERSITY

This wide-ranging issue moves from a light-hearted look at the series of successful deceptions in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to an analysis of gender differences in the use of taboo language among recent students at a regional university in the Southeast. It extends from a research-based justification for the use of invented spelling to an analysis of the impact of immigration issues in public schools near our nation's capital. It reaches from suggestions about how to help somebody write a short story that does not sound boring to a short story illustrating how one high school English teacher reaches the basketball fanatics in his classroom by drawing upon their mutual interests in the sport.

Poetry selections include those in the Maryland Showcase for Young Writers and a Louisianan's tribute to duck decoys on the Chesapeake.

The issue ends with a look at how the *Maryland English Journal*'s production processes work, an article solicited from the *Journal*'s editoral intern during her internship process.

Each of us involved with *MEJ*'s production hope you enjoy this issue. I continue to invite your input and submissions as readers of the *Journal*, and I thank you for your support thus far.

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Love and Laughter Among the Merry Wives

Howard C. Adams
Frostburg State University

This address was prepared for a general audience just prior to experiencing the performance of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by University of Maryland Baltimore County's 1993 *Shakespeare on Wheels*. Modern academicians seldom include *The Merry Wives* in undergraduate courses on Shakespeare or works of criticism. What makes the play popular with some theater-goers is that the heroine is not the young, beautiful, and insipid Anne Page who attracts suitors but speaks only 33 lines in the entire play, but rather two middle-aged wives who have the wit, the intelligence, and the gumption to manipulate both their husbands and their overweight predator, Falstaff. Falstaff appears to be asserting his manhood through sexual conquest–indicating that the staff is indeed riding for a fall. A great deal of the laughter evoked by this play comes simply from the plot, which is very close to what we would call situation comedy. There are no fewer than eleven actions designed to deceive people, and remarkably all of them work.

The Merry Wives of Windsor seems to have the unenviable distinction of being no one's favorite Shakespearean play. At least this is true among academicians. It is seldom included in undergraduate courses on Shakespeare and is almost completely neglected in works of criticism. Neither of the two favorite critical surveys of the canon gives more than a page or two to it, and Kenneth Muir's *Shakespeare's Comic Sequence* gives just over two pages to the Merry Wives, *far* less than he gives to any other play. Although the play has been much more successful on the stage than it has in the classroom, it does suffer from neglect even there when compared with comedies like *Much Ado*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*. Much of this probably stems from the disappointment in the character of Falstaff. Those acquainted with his role in the two *Henry IV* plays often fall in love with the witty fat man who cleverly evades every trap the prince and others set for him. But suddenly when he reappears in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, his wit seems blunted and he remains the butt of the jokes and the victim of traps laid for him not by a prince of the realm, but by two middle-aged, middle class housewives. Some claim this denigration is the result of the play having been a command performance. The legend that the Queen requested a play in which Falstaff was to appear "in love" seems to have gained general acceptance, and the suggestion has frequently been made that Shakespeare put one

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Howard C. Adams has the master's degree from Columbia University and a PhD from the Pennsylvania State University. He has taught for the University College of Rutgers University, and has been a professor of English at Frostburg State University since 1967.

over on Elizabeth I by presenting a play with a completely different central character, who merely has the name of Falstaff. He may solicit the favors of women, but one could hardly call his attitude love. The play seems to fail, then, at least in part, because it lacks the depth of character that audience and reader alike have come to expect from the bard.

But the play has not always been deemed a failure. Harbage, for instance, has noted that in surviving seventeenth-century writings there are "five allusions to Falstaff for every one to Hamlet" (73). It is the *only* Shakespearean play mentioned in Dryden's famous *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, and was produced more than any other Shakespearean play in the first half of the eighteenth century and consistently received high critical acclaim. The first notable piece of Shakespearean criticism is generally acknowledged to be Morgann's eighteenth-century critique: "On the Dramatic Character of Falstaff" (Eastman 53-62). And it is no wonder that it was popular in the century, since in form, movement, and sensibility, it is very close not only to classical Roman comedy, but also to the comedy of manners which was so dear to the neo-classical age. Some modern commentators have emphasized its liveliness: A. L. Rowse calls it "the most sheerly amusing play that Shakespeare ever wrote–riotous fun from beginning to end, and credibly ingenious in construction, characters, language–everything. It is a brilliant farce, always successful on the stage and has inspired operas. . ." (13). (However, the two most famous operas [by Verdi and Nicolai] incorporate considerable amounts of material from *Henry IV* parts I and II.) E. K. Chambers insists it is a far better play than either part of *Henry IV*, "admirably constructed, and moves, given competent interpreters, with astonishing vitality and go" (169). If, in other words, a theater-goer does not burden expectations with preconceptions of what it means to be "Shakespearean," the play moves across the stage with considerable charm and delight. Another thing that makes the play popular with some is that the heroine is *not* the young, beautiful, and insipid Anne Page who attracts suitors but speaks only 33 lines in the entire play, but rather two middle-aged wives who have the wit, the intelligence, and the gumption to manipulate both their husbands and their overweight predator, who appears to be asserting his manhood through sexual conquest–indicating that the staff is indeed riding for a fall.

This is, in many ways, a strange play, which perhaps adds to its attractiveness.

Instead of introducing a character or starting to develop a plot, as any self-respecting playwright would have done, Shakespeare begins *The Merry Wives of Windsor* by having the actors on stage try to bolster up Justice Shallow's flagging sense of importance. His prestige has been called into question by Falstaff, who has been denigrating, of all things, his coat of arms. This escutcheon, we learn, is characterized by twelve prominently displayed white fishes, called luces by people who know about such things as heraldry. To complicate matters, these are "passant," or walking fishes. When Shallow brags that it is an old coat of arms, Sir Hugh Evans, a Welsh clergyman and local schoolmaster, surmises that perhaps, then, they are not luces at all, but louses, which would not only be more fitting for an old coat, but much more likely to be "passant." Shallow comes to his own logic-defying defense by noting that they are fresh fishes, whereas an old coat would have salt fishes. Slender dodges the issue entirely by suggesting that they quarter the coat, and Shallow notes that this can be done by marrying, that is, adding a wife's coat of arms to the husband's; Evans perceptively declares that if Slender should take a wife it would be more like marring than marrying, and he proves this with impeccable logic by observing that if a person tears a coat into four pieces and gives one away, what remains is indeed a marred coat. I am telling you all this lest you fail to notice that this is a hilariously funny bit of word juggling to open the play–though it goes by in less than a minute–if it isn't cut entirely. You may not even have time to laugh, so please feel free to indulge right now, if you are so moved.

A bit later in the scene we find a more blatant reason for Shallow to be upset. Falstaff has beaten his men, killed his deer, and broken into his house. Falstaff in turn is upset because Shallow has *not* charged him with kissing his keeper's daughter, the sin he chooses to be remembered by. He readily admits to performing all four acts as well as breaking Slender's head open, displaying an incredibly egocentric belief that his admitting to these acts would certainly make them acceptable. The issue is turned over to the council, which turns out to consist of one Mr. Page, a local citizen married to a merry wife; Mr. Hugh Evans, the Welsh clergyman whom we have met; and the local innkeeper, referred to throughout the play merely as the Host of the Garter Inn (which is presumably so named after a prestigious political order rather than referring to a garment-keeper-upper). This august body never reports throughout the entire play, leading the astute theater-goer to wonder about the significance of the entire opening. Perhaps Will had some other play in mind when he began and then simply let his muse take him by the hand, leading him into a comedy he had no intention of writing. This would explain a lot.

But this scene does have one function: it introduces us in an offhand way to Mr. Page, who is crucial to the unity of the plot which ensues. It is not because he does anything significant on his own behalf, but the play has one action which involves his daughter, and another which involves his wife, so that without him there would be no clue to keeping these disparate plots together. The first of his relatives to be mentioned in the play is his daughter Anne, who, having just been promised an inheritance of 700 pounds in addition to having wealthy parents, is a highly marriageable young lady. Therefore, Justice Shallow, in cahoots with Parson Evans, has decided that his nephew Slender (a name wonderfully descriptive of this character's mental capacities and perhaps of his physical) should woo Miss Page. Slender passionately declares his love for Anne Page by noting: "She has brown hair and speaks small like a woman"; after hearing of her inheritance he adds, "She has good gifts." To facilitate this budding relationship, Evans knocks loudly on Page's door, which just happens to be right across the stage from where they are standing.

In response to the ensuing noise, Mr. Page, Falstaff, and others emerge from the house and discuss the Falstaff-Shallow contention, as summarized above. The young and beautiful Anne Page makes her entrance carrying suitable alcoholic refreshments from the house. But Shakespeare, who we are told never erased a line, must have changed his mind, since she is immediately sent back with her tray; instead of becoming wine-bibbers before our eyes, they are all called inside to dinner. All respond except Evans, Shallow, and Slender, who is reluctant to enter, having left behind his favorite book of poems and a popular joke book, his only sources of conversation. His servant, aptly named Simple, arrives on stage at this moment; but, alas, he has failed to bring them. Shallow then proposes an exceedingly perceptive question; he looks Slender straight in the eye and asks: "Can you love the maid?" The repercussions of this question are far reaching and profound, but since there is not time to expound upon them, let me merely record Slender's answer: "If you say, 'Marry her,' I will marry her." This is certainly more revealing than Slender intended it to be. At the end of the scene, he and Anne have their only moment alone together upon the stage. When she urges him to come in to dinner, since everyone else is hungry and waiting, he looks deeply into her eyes and croons: "I am not a-hungry"–a revealing statement indeed. Had not a half-starved Mr. Page come out to drag them in, they might all have starved to death through Slender's indecision. I doubt, however, that the audience would have waited.

A scene or two later, we discover that Falstaff is more deeply in trouble than we would have guessed from his first appearance. It seems that he has been subjected to a number of budget cuts and is currently reduced to a mere ten pounds a week (hardly adequate to support a man of Falstaffs girth). His only recourse seems to be to reduce his staff, but unfortunately he has not been developing an adequate retrenchment policy. The host comes to his aid by employing Bardolph as a tapster, a job for which he, with his glowing red W. C. Fields nose, is marvelously qualified. Falstaff is particularly relieved to be rid of Bardolph, since his *timing* is off, and if you think bad timing is detrimental to an actor, just think of the consequences to a band of thieves! Pistol and Nym are simply cashiered outright, an act which of course engenders in them a seething bitterness which will have consequences for the rest of the play.

In a rather ingenious plan to increase his revenue, Falstaff, exhibiting a flagrant deficiency in self-knowledge, decides to woo Mrs. Ford, a wealthy wife in Windsor, in order to get his hands on some of her husband's wealth, if not on the woman herself. In case this fails, he decides *at the same time* to woo Mrs. Page, since he has ascertained that she too controls some of her husband's cash. Since he wants to believe it, and since it is to his advantage to believe it, he conjures up a convenient memory that Mrs. Ford has recently given him "the leer of invitation," and that Mrs. Page has "examined [his] parts with most judicious" winks, the transforming beam of her eye sometimes turning his foot and sometimes his "portly belly" into gold. He should have heard a warning in his own metaphor when he imagines: "the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning glass." After he writes identical letters to the two women, he is surprised that his two fired servants will not deliver them, claiming themselves too noble to become his panders. When Falstaff induces his page to be his post and leaves the stage, Nym and Pistol get together to plot their revenge, scheming to inform both Ford and Page of Falstaff's intent to seduce their wives.

The scene then switches to the home of one Dr. Caius, a French physician who is practicing in Windsor. (Not being very politically correct, Shakespeare probably chose a *French* physician for the sheer joy of making fun of his attempts at using the English language–an ineptitude which I hope will not hinder us from understanding the wit of his lines.) Slender's servant Simple has arrived at the house and is trying to elicit the help of Mistress Quickly, Dr. Caius's nurse and housekeeper, to use her considerable influence to facilitate the marriage between Slender and Anne Page. After Mistress Quickly complains that her master abuses "God's patience and the King's English," and that his young servant John Rugby has an incurable fault in that he is "given to prayer," Dame Quickly, in the hope for material gain, declares herself quite amenable to Simple's suit: "I will do what I can for your master," she vows. But when Rugby announces the arrival of Caius, Simple is quickly and hilariously shoved inside a closet, where he hides until Dr. Caius discovers Simple while looking in the closet for his "simples," that is, herbs (not Shakespeare's best pun–but it works). Only then does the audience discover the reason for all this fuss. Dr. Caius is himself madly in love with Anne Page and her inheritance, and it would not be wise for Ms. Quickly to be discovered helping his rival. When Simple and his mission are discovered, Dr. Caius through mysterious reasons of his own decides to put the blame on Sir Hugh Evans, and in a jealous rage immediately sits down to challenge him to a duel, sending the message with the departing Mr. Simple. The quality of his love may be more decisive than that of Slender, but it is hardly any more healthy as he shouts in self-serving, jealous anger: "I shall have Anne Page for myself. . . I will myself have Anne Page." Dodging his rage, Ms. Quickly rather duplicitously assures him that Anne loves him and all is well. Keeping the threads of this plot together but risking the loss of creditability (at least with a twentieth century audience–which, I am reasonably certain, hardly concerned the bard in the least), Shakespeare suddenly introduces Anne's third suitor, Fenton, to Caius's house. He is, of course, seeking Ms. Quickly's aid in *his* suit of Anne Page, and she of course promises it to him, receiving a little money on the side to increase her devotion to his cause (though of course it may even more quickly advance Ms. Quickly's cause).

In the beginning of Act II, Mrs. Page, amused that she should be receiving a love letter now when she had none when she was young, finally receives her letter from Falstaff. What a delicious invitation to a world of romance he offers by noting the things they have in common: they are both getting old, both merry, and both love sack. He closes with the most abominable poem ever to come from Shakespeare's pen–far worse than Hamlet's lines to Ophelia. And Mrs. Page is hardly a merry wife when she reads it, incensed both because it comes from one who hardly knows her and in addition "is well-nigh worn to pieces with age." She perceives the proposition not as compliment to her attractiveness, but as an insult to her faithfulness. In a sentiment not unknown to our century, she generalizes the lust of one man to include all (*certainly* not justified) and resolves to "exhibit a bill in the parliament for the putting down of all men." Zeroing in on Falstaff the fat knight, she vows: "Revenged I will be, as sure as his guts are made of puddings." Mrs. Ford is in a lighter mood when she enters with her letter, but she is no less determined on revenge and comes up with a specific, if somewhat impractical suggestion: Let's "entertain him with hope till the wicked fires of lust have melted him in his own grease," a suggestion which has its advocates even to this day. Interassured of a woman's power to manipulate male lust (even as early as the garden of Eden, Milton taught Eve to approach Adam with "sweet, reluctant, amorous delay"), the wives insidiously suggest that they "lead him on with a fine-baited delay till he hath pawned his horses" (or, as we might say, sold his Mercedes).

As the two women discuss the effect these letters might have on their husbands' instincts to jealousy, the audience hears Pistol inform Ford and Nym tell Page of Falstaff's challenge to their wives' fidelity. The same bit of information induces totally different responses from the two men: Page envisions the tongue lashing Falstaff will get from his wife, and Ford envisions the cuckold's horns growing upon the head of the man whose wife is unfaithful. Page remains at peace, while Ford tortures himself in language that shows Shakespeare practicing up for the tragic and near tragic jealousies and distrust which in later plays threatened the lives and sanity of Othello and Leontes.

At this point Mistress Quickly enters seeking Anne Page, but don't bother wondering whether she is going to speak for Slender, Caius, or Fenton. Shakespeare won't tell–he is merely using Mistress Quickly as a means of getting the two wives off the stage so their husbands can discuss them, Page asserting his trust and Ford flaunting his jealousy. Their conversation is ended by the appearance of the Host who enters with a look of radiant joy on his face. Page immediately assumes that he must have come into either a quantity of liquor or of money. If Ford had been given a chance to speak, he surely would have have assumed the smile was generated by successful cuckold-making. But in this play an even greater smirk comes from the unparalleled joy of playing a nasty trick on someone else. And sure enough, the host has just arranged for the duel we saw brewing between Evans and Caius, but has sent them each to a different location to wait for the arrival of the foe. And the accent on trickery continues as Ford takes the Host aside to arrange for a meeting between Falstaff and himself in disguise as a Mr. Brook. It is the perfect way, he surmises, to discover the falsehood (or, perhaps, even the honesty) of his wife. Either way he will have satisfaction.

In the next scene, Falstaff increases Pistol's enmity toward him by refusing him a loan, and they discuss the relationship between honor and thievery in generalized terms which make us long for the sharp wit of the Falstaff of the *Henry IV* plays. But his heart begins to flutter a bit when Mistress Quickly enters to bring him the result of his two love letters. Fitting for a scene which began with a discussion of honor, she *praises* Falstaff for his skill at seduction, and announces that he has put Mrs. Ford "into such a canaries as 'tis wonderful." Of course being put into "canaries" has no meaning at all in this context (or any other), but Shakespeare had faith that we would understand. She butters up Falstaff (butter being just what he needs most) by insinuating that he has made a conquest which no other courtier has been able to do. She then praises his conquest over Mrs. Page by noting that he has overcome her lifelong religious scruples. Suddenly the consequences of using the same messenger for both wives breaks in on Falstaff's consciousness, until Ms. Quickly tells a marvelous lie, relieving his panic by assuring him that through her consummate skill, neither wife knows or will know anything of the other's inclinations. As she leaves, Pistol adds a contrapuntal theme to the scene by following her offstage, himself intent on seduction, though no one believes in his powers any more than they do in those of Falstaff, who remains on stage in a mood of stupefied wonder that anyone might have found him attractive: "Sayst thou so, old Jack? . . . Good body I thank thee. Let them say 'tis grossly done: so it be fairly done, no matter."

Ford, in the guise of Mr. Brook, breaks into this reverie, knowing exactly the price to buy Sir John Falstaff. He offers him first a draught of sack, and then a sack of money. How could he refuse? With delicious irony, "Mr. Brook" pretends to be in love with Mrs. Ford, who has turned him off with a perfect show of virtue, leaving him only useless "experience" and a lesson he chooses not to learn. So Falstaff, the great seducer, is being engaged to dim the brightness of her honor, so that she can no longer use this excuse to turn off Mr. Brook. Falstaff, of course, delights in accepting the job which he thinks he has already accomplished, and brags to "Mr. Brook" that he has already arranged an assignation with Ford's wife, and tells him the details. The denigrating names that he calls Mr. Ford in Brook's presence add marvelously to the ironic delight of the scene, as does his promise that Brook will lie with Ford's wife. Left alone on stage, Ford is wrought in the extreme, partly because of the insults he has had to bear, but primarily for discovering "the hell of having a false woman." He can trust a Welshman with his cheese and an Irishman with his liquor before he can trust his wife with– not Falstaff, but *herself*. A terrifying indictment, but ironically it redounds not upon his wife, but upon himself. He vilifies Page for his naiveté, while he himself, in a frightening way, is the naive one.

We move from this soliloquy to a field near Windsor where Dr. Caius is impatiently waiting for Hugh Evans to show up and fight. Surely any director will relish the scene where Dr. Caius urges his most reluctant page to pick up a weapon so Caius can *demonstrate* how he would kill Evans. Young Jack Ruby is saved when the Host shows up and offers to escort Caius to Frogmore where Anne Page is allegedly waiting. In a field near Frogmore, however, we find not Anne, but Hugh Evans, nervously trying to calm his fears by singing Marlowe's famous "Come Live With Me, and Be My Love." (Shakespeare's audience would have enjoyed the moment when he inappropriately inserts a line from the Psalms into the middle of the song.) His nervous attempt at music therapy is interrupted by the arrival of Caius, the Host, and others; and, while Slender slobbers over the stage playing the role of a lovesick puppy moaning for Anne Page, the Host explains that for his own health's sake he *had* to trick them: he would otherwise have lost his body curer and his soul curer, in the same fell swoop (swell foop?). Caius and Evans, reconciled by the discovery of a common enemy, stay behind to plot revenge on the host who has so ingloriously wounded their dignity.

After a short scene in which Ford reveals more of his sick jealousy, he is joined by others, including Page, who explains to Caius that, although *he* is in favor of Slender's suit for his daughter Anne, *his wife* definitely favors Caius. Meanwhile in the Ford household, the two wives, assuring us that while they may be merry, they are also faithful, prepare for Falstaff's arrival by preparing for his ignominious exit after they have frightened him half to death by announcing Ford's pretended arrival in a fit of jealousy. Falstaff enters and offers his "love" in wondrously inflated language, flattering himself more than his beloved by claiming that she *must* be a beautiful woman because only such would be worthy of his love. When Mrs. Page enters on cue to cry that Mr. Ford is approaching, they are surprised to discover he really is on the way. Although they wonder how Ford knew Falstaff would be there, they welcome the opportunity to scorch Ford for his unfounded jealousy at the same time that they punish Falstaff for his insulting presumption. And as the fat knight is carried off to be dumped into the Thames, Mrs. Ford perceptively notes that if he was really as frightened as she thinks he was, he is *indeed* going to need the washing. Ford takes his ribbing remarkably well, and casually plans to join Page in a birding expedition the next morning.

After this bit of tomfoolery, Shakespeare reminds us that there is a subplot to this play by showing Anne and Fenton in love and then introducing all the other characters in this hopeless love quadrangle, ending with Ms. Quickly convincing herself that she will remain honest to her vows: "I will do what I can for them all three, for so I have promised, and I'll be as good as my word." An honest woman indeed.

Back in his suite at the Garter Inn, Falstaff is bemoaning his fate when Ms. Quickly enters to explain how sorry Mrs. Ford is for his dumping, and how eager she is to "make amends" if he will only meet with her that morning while her husband is out birding. Stupidly, but egotistically believable, Falstaff falls again. But aha! Her husband isn't out birding; he is donning his disguise as Mr. Brook and making his way to the Garter to question Falstaff. The irony of the ensuing scene is even more poignant than that of their previous meeting, as, among other things, Falstaff explains to "Brook" that Ford is obviously ordained to be a cuckold. Informed of his wife's new assignation with Falstaff, and grieving that "there's a hole made in [his] best coat" (a rather degrading image for his love), Ford leaves once again to gather a crowd of witnesses and surprise his wife in her love nest–in his own house. How can Shakespeare get away with such gross repetition in plot? Well, he's Shakespeare, and besides he is *showing* how gullible mankind is when offered the chance to believe what he wants to be true. And there are variations, not only in the means of escape and the salacious suggestion behind Ford beating a witch out of his house with his huge cudgel, but in such unlikely episodes as Mrs. Page almost arriving late for her cue because she stops to observe a Latin lesson on the way (Come on, Will!). But Shakespeare does use this opportunity to prepare his audience for *Macbeth* by noting that witches do grow beards.

Can Shakespeare get away with repeating the trickery a third time? Even Ford and Page, who are in on the entrapment this time, are doubters. But then, Samson fell for Delilah's trap *four* times in a row, so why not chance it? And the setting for the third meeting is enough different to relieve Falstaff from the dangers of entering Ford's house a third time. Ms. Quickly visits Falstaff once more in his room at the Garter, and after describing how Mrs. Ford has suffered from being denied his presence, she delivers a letter suggesting a meeting in the forest in the dead of night. Making use of an old legend, in which they know Falstaff is a believer, they suggest that he disguise himself as Herne the Hunter, with huge stag-like horns on his head, and meet them at the foot of Herne's oak. Falstaff's soul responds to the romance of a midnight moonlight encounter, and the stage is set for the final act–around Herne's oak. In four short scenes we find all in readiness: Falstaff is properly prepared by Ms. Quickly; Page instructs Slender that at the proper moment he should run off with Anne, who will be dressed in white; Mrs. Page informs Caius that she has undercut her husband's plan by having her daughter dress in green, so he should be ready to run off with her; and Evans gives final instructions to the children of Windsor (some scholars suggest "the singing-children of St. George's Chapel" in Windsor), who are dressed as fairies, supplied with noisemakers, and adorned with candles on their heads. They have been carefully instructed to emerge from hiding at a given signal, suddenly display their lights while some sing eerie sounds and others use their rattles, and then to swarm upon Falstaff, pinching him rapidly and fiercely.

Falstaff enters on cue, horns waving in the air, and he tries to make himself feel more comfortable by characteristically comparing himself with Zeus, who made many successful conquests dressed as an animal. But he does have just enough insight to remark how closely Leda's swan might resemble a goose, which just may be a suitable image for any man in love. When Mrs. Ford appears, he romantically emotes over the power of aphrodisiacs, and when Mrs. Page also shows up, he grossly imagines himself a poached deer with enough haunch to be divided for two. Graciously he bequeaths his horns to their husbands, but before the gift can be properly bestowed, the signal is sounded and the fairies descend on their victim, directed by the queen of the fairies herself, most often played by Mistress Quickly, though sometimes by Anne, depending on whether the director prefers the folio or the quarto. But something deeper than mere harassment is going on in this midnight revelry. The queen of the fairies evokes trial by fire as she instructs her subjects:

> With trial fire touch me his finger end:
> If he be chaste, the flame will back descend
> And turn him to no pain; but if he start,
> It is the flesh of a corrupted heart.

Falstaff, of course, does not pass the test, and it is soon obvious in the liturgical verses which follow that he has become the ritual scapegoat, bearing the evils of society:

> Fie on sinful fantasy!
> Fie on lust and luxury!
> Lust is but a bloody fire,
> Kindled with unchaste desire,
> Fed in heart, whose flames aspire,
> As thoughts do blow them, higher, higher.
> Pinch him, fairies, mutually;
> Pinch him for his villainy. . . .

But Falstaff, surely the goat of this play–with horns and all–is not banished from society to cleanse it, as is normal for a scapegoat (and as Malvolio is banished from *Twelfth Night*). Perhaps he is spared because he gains considerable self insight and undergoes confession and penance as sufficient cleansing. "I do begin to perceive that I am made an ass." "See now how wit may be made a Jack-a-Lent, when 'tis upon ill employment!" "Have I laid my brain in the sun and dried it, that it wants matter to prevent so gross o'erreaching as this?" Falstaff not only takes a scourging from himself, but from the rest of the cast. Even if we were not virtuous, asks Mrs. Page, how could you think "that ever the Devil could have made *you* our delight?" "What, a hodge pudding? A bag of flax?" urges Mr. Ford, to which Mrs. Page adds "a puffed man," referring both to his size and his ego. The laughter may be crueller than banishment, but it is cleansing–until Page invites the assembled crowd to laugh at his wife because he has outwitted her by arranging for Slender to marry their daughter Anne. But alas, she turns the laughter on her husband proclaiming that she has out-trumped him by dressing Anne in green for Caius. With superb but obvious timing, Slender appears at that moment with a boy dressed in a white gown and understandably refuses to marry him. Hard upon this Caius appears with his boy dressed in green, whom he finds no more satisfying. It is neither parent, of course, who wins, but love, in the form of Fenton entering with the real Anne Page and delivering a discourse on the nature of love and marriage. His abduction, he insists, was no sin, "since therein she doth...shun/ A thousand irreligious cursed hours,/ Which forced marriage would have brought upon her." The comedy ends, as any good comedy should, with reconciliation–the Pages accepting Fenton and inviting everyone, "Sir John and all," home to a merry fire and a good meal. The final couplet of the play is delicious, as Ford points out a rare and ironic example of Falstaff's integrity:

> To Master Brook you yet shall hold your word;
> For he tonight shall lie with Mistress Ford.

A great deal of the laughter evoked by this play obviously comes simply from the plot, which is very close to what we would call situation comedy. There are no fewer than eleven actions designed to deceive people, and remarkably all of them work. Falstaff sends duplicate letters to the wives (who have no idea that he is more dedicated to greed than to lust); while Falstaff is betraying the wives, he has no idea that Nym and Pistol are betraying him to the not-so-merry husbands; Mistress Quickly, the only character who is involved in both plots, remains unbetrayed while she is underhandedly promising to be the exclusive agent for all three of the rival suitors to Anne, and while she betrays Falstaff in her role as the go-between for the two wives in their deception of Falstaff; the Host benevolently deceives Dr. Caius and Sir Hugh, thwarting their jealous duel, and is in turn subject to the loss of his horses in their retaliatory deception of him in an affair involving non-existent German visitors; Ford plays his trick on Falstaff by posing as Mr. Brook and deriving information from him, an action which befuddles the wives when the real Ford suddenly shows up to play his role in their plots; the children of Windsor play their parts in tricking Falstaff, against his better judgment, into believing in the existence of fairies, incidently giving him black and blue remembrances; Mr. Page deceives his wife by arranging for Slender to steal away their daughter, while she deceives him by instructing Caius to take the woman in green, and Anne deceives both her parents by convincing Fenton to take advantage of the moonlight mayhem to do his own eloping. At one point Shakespeare concentrates the laughter by drawing six of the deceivers and six of the duped together for six acts of deception at the end of one scene. It is no wonder that the eighteenth century, with its penchant for comedy of manners, loved this play above all other Shakespearean comedies.

Most of the other comic devices are verbal and therefore sometimes hard to digest in a fast-paced comedy, even when one can discover that late twentieth century rarity of rarities: clear enunciation. The irony of the Brook-Falstaff scenes is broad and hilarious, hard to miss, and needs no comment. But the puns go by quickly. When Falstaff asks Pistol if it is true that he stole from Slender, he answers, "No, it is false." That is, how can thievery be a true act. When Mrs. Page suggests that Falstaff must have had his love letters printed with blanks for the names, she elaborates: "He cares not what he puts into the press, when he would put us two. I would rather be a giantess and lie under Mount Pelion." The punning moves from sex to violence when Falstaff attempts to get rid of Pistol by saying, "Hang no more about me, I am no gibbet for you." When Mr. Brook bestows his gift of sack upon Falstaff, he welcomes any *brook* that overflows in this manner, and when Anne Page asks Slender's will regarding marriage, he answers, "I ne'er made my will yet, I thank heaven I am not such a sickly creature." Elsewhere, Falstaff complains to Mrs. Ford that he was thrown into a ford, Evans is upset that he was cozened by cousins, Mrs. Ford vows to the antlered Falstaff that he will remain her deer, and Falstaff notes that when Zeus came to Leda in the form of a swan, it was a "foul fault."

A play which contains a Welsh clergyman, a French physician, and an illiterate Mistress Quickly is bound to have its share of language humor. Dr. Caius is continuously mispronouncing words in a manner that goes beyond a mere accent. Hugh Evans, whom Falstaff accuses of "mak[ing] fritters of English," continually substitutes nouns for other parts of speech, often with comic effect. Thus he promises Slender: "I will *description* the matter to you, if you be *capacity* of it," and asks, regarding Anne, if he can *affection* the woman. He later tells Slender that Mistress Quickly is *acquaintance* with Anne Page, and when he is on trial claims that he will "be *judgment* by" the Host of the Garter Inn. Mistress Quickly's contribution to the English language is a host of malapropisms designed to keep the audience alert. We have noted that she used *canaries* for quandaries, and she also substitutes *allicholy* for melancholy, *speciously* for especially, says *courageous* when she means outrageous, and *infection* when she means affection, as when she claims that Mrs. Page "has a marvelous *infection* to [Falstaff's] little page." Bardolph supports her infection when he claims a "gentleman had drunk himself out of his five *sentences*," and Simple refuses to speak since he "may not *conceal*" (rather than reveal) the information. Slender adds to the fun by praying that though his love may be small, heaven may *decrease* it in time, and by hoping that "upon familiarity may grow more *contempt*" rather than content. This humor still works on the modern stage, though it often takes a skillful actor to derive the full effect from the text.

Anyone acquainted with the Falstaff of the Henry plays will certainly be looking for "fat jokes" in the *Merry Wives*, and though without the prince they have lost some of their piquancy, their presence shows that Shakespeare's taste had not improved in the interval between the plays. Falstaff begins with a mild pun, noting that though he measures two yards about the waist, he does not intend to waste any of his substance. The angry Pistol aims for the same spot when he compares the Falstaffian girth to a dunghill and adds his curse: "Let vultures gripe thy guts!" Insulted by Falstaff's letter, Mrs. Page vows to be revenged "as sure as his guts are made of puddings." Mrs. Ford's ire is hardly less in her desire for revenge: "What tempest, I trow, threw this whale, with so many tuns of oil in his belly, ashore at Windsor? How shall I be revenged on him? I think the best way were to entertain him with hope till the wicked fire of lust have melted him in his own grease," which is pretty much the plan they put into effect. Except for a few choice epithets, such as "greasy knight," "this gross wat'ry [pumpkin]," and "puffed man," the rest of the hefty aspersions in the play are cast by the man himself. When noting that he might have died when cast into the Thames, he comments: "a death that I abhor, for the water swells a man, and what a thing should I have been when I had been swelled! I should have been a mountain of mummy." Later, describing his Thames bath to Mr. Brook, he well describes the plight of an overweight man: "Think of that–a man of my kidney–think of that–that am as subject to heat as butter; a man of continual dissolution and thaw. It was a miracle to 'scape suffocation. And in the height of this bath, when I was more than half stewed in grease, like a Dutch dish, to be thrown into the Thames and cooled, glowing hot, in that surge, like a horseshoe! Think of that–hissing hot!–think of that, Master Brook." O that the wives would have been there to enjoy that speech, knowing that he got the "cold shower" that they wished to bestow upon him. Upon hearing that the Host of the Inn had been cheated of his horses, Falstaff is somewhat comforted to know that he is not alone the butt of practical jokes, but wishes still that the *whole world* might be cheated to keep him company. This leads him to envision the humiliation he will be subject to at court should they find out: "If it should come to the ear of the Court how I have been transformed, and how my transformation hath been washed and cudgeled, they would melt me out of my fat drop by drop and liquor fisherman's boots with me. I warrant they would whip me with their fine wits till I were as crestfallen as a dried pear." In the final scene of the play, when Falstaff enters with antlers on his head, he announces his presence to the audience proclaiming: "I am here a Windsor stag, and the fattest, I think, i' the forest. Send me a cool rut time, Jove, or who can blame me to piss my tallow?" The comparison may be a bit gross, perhaps even more than on the surface, when we realize that in the heat and sweat of "rutting time" it was usual for a stag to lose weight by secreting fat. The image is not helped by the next stage direction: "[Enter Mistress Ford and Mistress Page]." But once again, the rutting time was not to be, for after a tease, the noise of the fairies drives the wives away to their merriment, and Falstaff's rationalization of the third cooling off period is a return to a more jocular and perhaps even religious strain, with a strange declaration of salvation:

> I think the Devil will not have me damned,
> Lest the oil that's in me should set hell on fire:
> He would never else cross me thus.

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I Have Heard Their Singing

Errol Miller
Monroe, Louisiana

I have heard their singing,
familiar voices from
New England, Long Island,
Upper Chesapeake,
the Illinois River area:
canvasback ducks wet
with history.

Where the Susquehanna River
empties into Chesapeake Bay
shallow waters nurture a marshy region
of migratory birds. It is the stoic
decoys that interest me, released
from their shelves at the turn
of the century, attracting
thousands of lives
who come, of course, to stare.

They are the lovely lonely ones,
moving as a wall, in groups, they
spin off with the tide,
painted nostrils
and flat breasts heaving
in the wind,
keeping to themselves.

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Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 2

A Descriptive Study of Gender Differences in Proscribed Language Behavior, Beliefs, and Attitudes

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This paper was presented at the session of the American Dialect Society held in conjunction with the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English, November 17-21, 1993, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. To determine gender differences in the function of proscribed language in the lives of Caucasian undergraduate college students of the 1990s, survey research was conducted at a regional university in the Southeast. In a regular classroom setting, approximately twenty per cent of the sophomore class, a total of 174 subjects, 87 women and 87 men, voluntarily completed a questionnaire which was designed to check taboo language attitudes, beliefs, and usage in various situations. This research takes a contextual approach and reveals gender differences in what taboo language is used, why it is used, how it is used, with whom it is used, where it is used, as well as frequency with which it is used. The results of this survey indicate a difference in cultural codes regulating men and women subjects' proscribed language behavior. A two-thirds majority of both men and women subjects reported the belief that there exists a double standard for taboo language use which assumes that taboo language is for the use of men. Similarly, a majority of both men and women subjects reported a belief that college women who use taboo language are criticized for being unladylike.

In her book of etiquette published in America in 1913, Parsons contended that taboo language belongs to men. She stated, "To-day no gentleman will 'insult' another–at least not very openly–before a lady. He cannot even swear at another man–or in fact at anything–with a woman around" (129-130).

Flexner, in his preface to the *Dictionary of American Slang* published in 1960, also indicated gender differences in the use of taboo language. He stated that "most American slang is created and used by males" (xii). In 1985, Cameron stated that in some communities, people will agree that certain language practices like swearing are more acceptable for men than for women (*Feminism* 31).

Does society in the 1990s still condemn women's use of proscribed language more harshly than it does men's? Or are the winds of change bringing fresh, new attitudes towards taboo language use by women? In 1973, Farb noted the winds of change when he stated, "nowadays young

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women use words that were formerly taboo for them with as much freedom as young men use them" (55-56). Likewise, Trudgill in 1983 maintained that "the use of taboo vocabulary is now much more evenly distributed between the sexes than formerly" (163). Yet Cameron found that an investigation of terms for the male genitals which she conducted at the College of William and Mary in 1990 revealed that women subjects produced less than half as many terms for the penis as men subjects produced ("Naming of Parts" 374).

Trudgill's statement might suggest a change in the once widely held view that taboo language is more acceptable for men than it is for women. To address this notion and the notion of a greater parity of taboo language use by males and females in the nineties, I conducted survey research during the spring and summer of 1993. The purpose of this research was to see if gender differences in proscribed language behavior, attitudes, and beliefs would emerge from an anonymous self-report questionnaire filled out by Caucasian undergraduates enrolled at a regional university in the Southeast.

Participation in the study was voluntary within a regular classroom setting. Subjects were enrolled in six sections of the required sophomore course entitled "Literature of the Western World." Approximately twenty percent of the sophomore class, a total of 174 subjects, 87 women and 87 men, completed the questionnaire which was designed to check gender differences in taboo attitudes, beliefs, and usage in various situations. The women subjects ranged from 18-34 years of age. The men subjects ranged from 18-37 years of age. Average age was 20.1 for women and 22.2 for men.

The results of this study suggest a difference in cultural codes regulating Caucasian men and women's use of taboo language in the Southeast. A two-thirds majority of both men and women subjects reported the belief that there exists a double standard for taboo language use which assumes that taboo language is for the use of men. Similarly, a majority of both men and women subjects reported a belief that college women who use taboo language are criticized for being *unladylike*.

Although a majority of both men and women subjects believe that taboo language should be equally appropriate for women to use as it is for men, the majority of both men and women subjects believe that college women are less prone to use taboo language than are college men. Is this because women lack the vocabulary for taboo talk? Not according to the survey. The survey revealed that the majority of both men and women subjects believe that women have a taboo language vocabulary equal to that of men.

In checking attitudes towards prestige to be derived from taboo language use, I found that approximately one-third of the men and one-third of the women subjects believe that some prestige is attached to the use of taboo language by college men in certain contexts, whereas only approximately one-sixth of the men and one-sixth of the women subjects believe that some prestige is attached to the use of taboo language by college women in certain contexts.

Another finding of this study reveals that although the majority of men subjects do not judge college women who use taboo language as assertive, the majority of women subjects do view women who use taboo language as assertive. However, college men who use taboo language are not judged assertive by a majority of men or women subjects.

Before I report subjects' beliefs concerning how taboo language use intersects religious beliefs, let me reiterate that this survey research was conducted in the Southeast, in the Bible Belt, where social life revolves around the church. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that the majority of both men and women subjects reported the belief that swearing is a matter of morals, not just a matter of etiquette. In addition, approximately nine-tenths of both men and women subjects reported a belief that taking the name of God in vain is offensive to God. Furthermore, a majority of both men and women subjects reported a belief that use of taboo language in our society is a result of indifference toward religion.

Next, let us leave attitudes and beliefs and examine the self-report findings on usage. Although subjects indicated that they fit their taboo language usage to the situation, almost all subjects reported the use of taboo language with some degree of regularity. Whereas approximately fifty percent of women subjects reported using taboo language very rarely, only twenty percent of men subjects reported using taboo language very rarely. On the other hand, whereas eight percent of women subjects reported using taboo language frequently, twenty-three percent of men subjects reported frequent use of it. Clearly, men subjects rate themselves as more frequent users of taboo language than women subjects rate themselves.

Moreover, gender differences were reported in where subjects generally use taboo language, with men subjects indicating the use of taboo language in more public places than women subjects. Although many men and women subjects reported a solitary use of taboo language, thirteen percent of women subjects indicated they use taboo language only when they are alone, while just five percent of men subjects reported only solitary use of taboo language. A majority of both men and women subjects reported less tendency to use taboo language in the presence of parents, children, and strangers than with peers. Similarly, a majority of both men and women subjects reported that they use taboo language more freely with friends of the same sex than with friends of the opposite sex.

Subjects also reported gender differences in taboo language choice. In response to the question which instructed subjects to list the taboo terms they use most frequently, men subjects reported a tendency to prefer taboo language which refers to sex, while women subjects reported a tendency to prefer taboo language which refers to hell and damnation. In addition, women subjects reported significantly less preference for excretory terms than did men subjects. The majority of both men and women subjects reported that the taboo term they consider to be the strongest and most powerful is the F-word and the taboo term they consider to be the weakest and least powerful is "hell." The weak term "hell," by the way, is the term women subjects reported greatest preference for using.

The majority of both men and women subjects reported using denigrating terms to refer to members of the opposite sex. Women subjects produced a total of 26 denigrating terms for men, while men subjects produced a total of 20 denigrating terms for women. The denigrating term listed most frequently by women subjects was "bastard;" the denigrating term listed most frequently by men subjects was "bitch." Whereas approximately one-half of the men subjects reported using derogatory terms to refer to members of the same sex, approximately one-fourth of women subjects reported using derogatory terms to refer to members of the same sex.

Furthermore, this investigation revealed gender differences in reasons for using taboo language. Although all except one of the subjects reported using taboo language for the purpose of venting emotion, fifty-five percent of women subjects, as compared to twenty-four percent of the men subjects, reported venting emotion as their *only* reason for using taboo language. In addition, more men than women subjects reported using taboo language for getting attention, establishing social power, bonding with friends, achieving strength of expression, insulting people, defying authority, emphasizing a point, shocking people, and signifying friendship. Also, more men than women subjects indicated a tendency to use taboo language in a creative, playful way.

In conclusion, this survey research into the cultural phenomenon of taboo language reveals traditional attitudes still firmly entrenched in the fabric of the Southeastern subjects' lives. Evidence of the winds of change is not very apparent. Not only do a two-thirds majority of both men and women subjects believe that there exists a double standard for taboo language use which assumes that taboo language use is more appropriate for men than women, but also a majority of both men and women subjects believe that college women who use taboo language are criticized for being unladylike. Perhaps these two beliefs have a bearing on the usage findings of this study. This research takes a contextual approach and reveals gender differences in what taboo language is used, why it is used, how it is used, with whom it is used, where it is used, as well as frequency with which it is used.

This study has been limited to setting forth the findings of taboo language behavior, beliefs, and attitudes on the basis of sex. Many aspects of the study remain for further treatment. For example, this study does not include an analysis of data as related to subjects' strength of religious belief, socioeconomic status, section of the country, or whether subjects were reared in city, town, or rural area, although the data has been gathered for such analysis. Perhaps studying other variables associated with taboo language use will shed further light on those factors influencing taboo language behavior, attitudes, and beliefs.

In closing, a word of caution may be in order. Previous research I conducted with Caucasian undergraduate college women in 1991 did take into consideration the variable of section of the country and revealed that Southeastern Caucasian women subjects were significantly more inhibited in their use of taboo language than Northeastern Caucasian women subjects. Since regional factors may be of considerable importance in influencing young college women's proscribed language behavior, attitudes, and beliefs, there is danger in generalizing the findings of this study.

In their *Newsweek* article, "Toppling the Last Taboos," Martz and McKelvey argue that with AIDS came the weakening of taboos surrounding the topic of sex. They also argue that with the testimony of Professor Anita Hill at the Senate confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas came additional weakening of taboos surrounding the topic of sex (32). Although Hill avoided vulgar terms for the male genitals and chose to use the scientific term "penis" instead, the taboos surrounding sex, nonetheless, have been weakened by her testimony. In this changing environment, we are likely to find that taboo terms relating to sex gain more respectability and usage in the 1990s, even among Southeastern women.

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Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 2

Invented Spelling: Research Applications for the Classroom Teacher

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This paper investigates research into children's preconventional or invented spelling to determine its applications to classroom practices. Studies reveal that children's spelling errors change progressively and consistently over time in a stage-like pattern. A relationship exists between reading and spelling ability; invented spelling predicts reading achievement. An experimental comparison of children encouraged to use either traditional or invented spellings in their creative writing revealed that the invented spellers scored higher on several measures of reading and spelling achievement. By encouraging children to use invented spelling, a teacher provides the opportunity for natural literacy development and is in turn provided with an assessment tool.

"My char uti my shos I bupt ito Adam I hrt my salf"

This first grader's written production would probably make any English teacher cringe at its obvious incorrectness in spelling and punctuation. Jennifer's communication in standard English would read: "My chair untied my shoes. I bumped into Adam. I hurt myself." The spellings in her original production are called invented spellings. Jennifer added to her limited knowledge of correct spellings by inventing the spellings of unknown words. She spelled by recording the sounds she heard as she said the words aloud. Again, most English teachers would cringe.

A first grade teacher, however, would probably see the production as full of information about the student's literacy development. As her teacher, I can observe that Jennifer knows how to spell the word "my." I watched her copy "Adam" from Adam's nametag on his desk. Thus, she can use references to help her spell. We had just studied the sounds of "sh" and "ch" in reading; Jennifer has obviously grasped this information and transferred it to her writing. Jennifer's invented spellings reveal that she has little trouble with the beginnings and endings of words. During the next several individual conferences I had with Jennifer, I would work with her on concentrating on the middle sounds in words. We would also pay attention to adding periods to the natural breaks in her story. As an experienced first grade teacher, I also know that this diagnosis made from Jennifer's writing pertains to her reading as well as her spelling. Children can always read their own spelling. The strengths in her spell-

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ings are, therefore, strengths in her reading. Since she recorded the sounds she heard as she said the words aloud, she probably has trouble decoding any of the sounds that are missing when she reads.

All of the diagnostic information above I gathered by observing the student and using my common sense and experience. During my graduate studies in reading, I examined the research on invented spelling to see how it would support what I had seen to be true in my classroom.

The first piece of research I found to be helpful named and described stages that most children go through as they learn how to spell in a naturally developmental way. In work published in 1982 and 1987, J. Richard Gentry identified the following stages of development in invented spelling. These stages parallel the development that I have observed in first graders from September to June.

1. In the *precommunicative stage*, the speller uses alphabet letters to represent a message but demonstrates no knowledge of letter-sound relationships. Number symbols may also form parts of words.
2. The *semi-phonetic stage* is characterized by a beginning understanding of sound-letter correspondences. All of the sounds of a word are not present. The speller uses letters whose names match the sounds that are to be represented.
3. During the *phonetic stage*, spellers represent all of the sounds of a word. Letters are used based on their sounds and not on English spelling rules.
4. The *transitional stage* is characterized by an understanding of spelling conventions. The spellers no longer rely solely on sounds. Morphological units begin to be used. Some learned correct spellings are used.
5. The *correct speller* continues to develop a large body of known spellings. The speller has knowledge of basic rules of spelling. Words that are incorrectly spelled are noticed.

Gentry's work in naming and describing concise stages of invented spelling was developed after more than ten years of cumulative research at the University of Virginia under the direction of the late Edmund Henderson. Henderson and his students, including Gentry, began to research spelling development in children in the early 1970s. Much of the research was observational. Henderson and his colleagues collected children's writing samples or administered successive spelling tests over a school year and looked for trends in growth and development. Gentry's stages are the final outcome of the researchers at the University of Virginia observing for years that different children in different situations typically followed the same developmental trends over and over again in spelling.

Edmund Henderson, moreover, was greatly influenced by another researcher, Charles Read, in pursing research into spelling. Charles Read conducted a basal study of invented spelling in 1971. Read collected the written productions of three- to six-year-old children over the course of a school year. He completed a complex linguistic analysis of all of the spelling errors in these productions. He was the first to discover that a developmental pattern existed in spelling development. He concluded that children's spelling errors change consistently and progressively over time. The errors change consistently in that letter substitutions are always close in patterns of articulation to the correct letter. The errors change progressively toward correct spellings.

Research into invented spelling has not only traced developmental trends. Researchers have also found that an analysis of a child's invented spelling can be used as a diagnostic tool. A child's invented spelling can help to predict reading achievement and to plan individualized reading instruction. Two studies that set out to explore these points were conducted by Morris and Perney in 1984 and by Richgels in 1986.

Morris and Perney tested 75 first graders with an 18-word spelling test in September. They asked the children to write the letters of the alphabet. The teachers of the children predicted their reading success and the first graders were tested with the Metropolitan Readiness Test. In January, the subjects were given the same 18-word spelling test that they had taken in September. In May of the same school year, the first graders were tested for reading achievement with an informal word recognition task and the Metropolitan Achievement Test. The findings revealed that the September and January spelling tests were good predictors of May reading achievement. Morris and Perney also found that the Metropolitan Readiness Test did not predict reading success as accurately as invented spelling. The researchers assert that teachers should evaluate the knowledge that children bring with them to the writing process. "In this way a spelling assessment can become a valuable and rare commodity in educational practice–a sample of behavior that provides a view of the ongoing learning process" (Morris and Perney 456).

In 1986, Richgels created an informal test of invented spelling that he administered to 26 first graders at the beginning of a school year. He had each child spell ten words with plastic letters. An examiner recorded the spellings and the number of correct phonemes in each spelling. Richgels found that the results of his invented spelling test correlated positively with the results of two traditional readiness tests–The Test of Early Reading Ability and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. Richgels concludes that a test of invented spelling can provide direct insight into student abilities and can therefore be used in a diagnostic-prescriptive manner. Richgels' report of his research, found in volume one of the *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, contains the actual test and an explanation of how to score it. A classroom teacher could easily use this same test to gain information about incoming students.

Research also shows a relationship between reading and spelling achievement. Zutell and Rasinski investigated the connections between oral reading abilities and spelling abilities of third and fifth graders.

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Each of the subjects read aloud, took a spelling test, and took the appropriate level of the Gates-MacGinite Reading Test. Spelling accuracy and phonetic quality of the spellings were significantly correlated with oral reading ability in the third and fifth graders. "Spelling accuracy was clearly the best overall correlate of oral reading ability" (Zutell and Rasinski 161). The researchers concluded that a common word knowledge underlies both spelling and reading, and that holistic teaching approaches, including encouraging the use of invented spelling, support these developing abilities.

The research supports the beliefs of many early childhood educators that a child's invented spelling can provide a valuable window into literacy development. Some teachers, however, remain concerned that if children are allowed to invent spellings in their creative writing, they will never learn to spell correctly. One study compares the progress of children who use invented spelling with those who use traditional spelling in the classroom. Clarke completed this very comprehensive study in 1988. She designed the study to compare the reading, writing, and spelling progress of children encouraged to use invented spelling with those encouraged to use traditional spelling in their creative writing. One hundred and two native English speaking children of similar socioeconomic backgrounds and with a wide range of ability levels, as determined by pretests, were the subjects of Clarke's study. They were students in four first grade classes from a suburb of Ottawa, Canada. Two of the classroom teachers encouraged invented spelling and two encouraged traditional spelling in a creative writing period of 80 to 100 minutes per week. Each teacher used a basal reading program for reading instruction and also taught phonics skills in isolation. The study was conducted from October to March of a school year. The children were pretested individually in October on their ability to name and print the letters of the alphabet and the days of the week, to print as many words as they could, and to read a list of high-frequency words. Children's writing samples were analyzed for length and complexity, speed of writing, level of word usage, and spelling strategy once each month from November to March. A final sample was taken in March from each child and was controlled for topic, writing time, and teacher instructions across all classes. Children were posttested in groups of four or five for spelling progress with the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), Spelling Subtest, Level One and by spelling a list of words that were half high-frequency, irregularly spelled words and half lower-frequency, regularly spelled words. They were tested individually for reading progress with the Durrell Word Recognition/Word Analysis Test, a word recognition test using selected words from the list they were asked to spell in the spelling posttest, and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests of Word Attack and Passage Comprehension.

Analysis of writing samples revealed that text length increased over time for both groups, with the invented spelling group showing greater increases and greater text length. A greater increase in writing speed was observed for the invented spelling group. The variety and level of words used increased for both groups. The average percent of words spelled correctly across the months was 67% in the invented spelling group and 94% in the traditional spelling group.

There was a significant difference, $p < .001$, between the two groups on two of the spelling posttests. Inventive spellers scored higher on the spelling test of the WRAT and on the list of low-frequency, regularly spelled words. Reading posttests revealed that children using invented spelling performed better on tasks requiring word analysis. There was little difference between the groups in flash word recognition and reading comprehension. Analysis of the posttest scores of low-achieving matched pairs from each group revealed that invented spelling was more beneficial for initial low achievers than traditional spelling. Children who used invented spelling in their creative writing scored higher on more measures than children using traditional spelling in their creative writing.

Clarke's research allows teachers to feel comfortable with using invented spelling in the classroom. Children who invent spelling learn how to spell correctly and become better decoders in the process. The increase in inventive spellers' writing speed and text length allows them to become better writers. Teachers of young children also know the importance of accepting the work of initial low achievers and helping them build on it, rather than expecting them to struggle with unattainable perfection. All of these benefits, coupled with the diagnostic tool that invented spelling provides, make children's natural explorations of spelling more valuable than memorization of lists of words as a spelling curriculum for young children.

Educational research has investigated the topic of invented spelling for more than twenty years. Read, Henderson, and Gentry have identified developmental trends in children's spelling errors. Teachers can refer to these trends and identify where their students fall along a continuum of literacy development. This information and a detailed analysis of a child's spelling errors can help a teacher provide reading and spelling instruction in an individualized, diagnostic-prescriptive manner. The work of Morris and Perney, as well as Richgels, supports this use of invented spelling. Finally, Clarke's research gives us justification to allow children to use invented spelling in their creative writing. Through allowing invented spelling in the classroom, we can capitalize on a naturally developmental sequence to further literacy development.

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MCTELA: A Professional Organization for Educators Interested in English/Language Arts

The Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (MCTELA) was founded in the late 1950s. Originally geared to English instruction, it expanded in the 1970s to include all language arts teachers. Business meetings and conferences used to take place at the same annual meeting, but the organization has grown to include monthly Executive Board meetings and semi-annual conferences. Activities include publication of the *Maryland English Journal*, quarterly newsletters, Teacher of the Year selections, "Showcase" writing competitions for elementary students, and representation as an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English.

The purposes of the Council are to improve the quality of instruction in English/Language Arts at all educational levels, pre-kindergarten through university; to encourage research, experimentation, and investigation in the teaching of English; to sponsor publications of interest to English/Language Arts teachers; to represent the interests of English/Language Arts before the public; and to integrate the efforts of all those who are concerned with English/Language Arts instruction.

In America, the immigrant has been the builder, whereas in other countries, the foreigner has been the invader.

Daniel Boorstein,
Speech given to Congress, 1990

Immigration Issues

Kathryn A. Megyeri
Sherwood High School

Probably no segment of society is asked to cope more on a daily basis with America's immigrants than its public school teachers. Thus, they need to address the correspondence of immigrants' skills with the job market following graduation and the communities' demand to incorporate multi-culturalism into existing mandates for increased reading and writing scores.

Those of us who teach in public schools are acutely aware of current immigration issues. The foreign-born percentage of our total population is growing. Currently, one million legal immigrants and refugees enter the U.S. each year, but this number does not include illegal immigrants. In all of the nation's metropolitan areas, there are 20 million foreign-born, one out of every ten residents. Now, more than ever before, "We are not a Nation, but a teeming Nation of Nations," as Walt Whitman observed.

As waves of immigrants have settled in the U.S. in the last ten years, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) enrollments have swelled. In the Washington, D. C., area alone, 27,000 children are in transitional classes, and thousands more have moved full-time into regular classrooms, school officials report, according to Washington-based Urban Institute (Buckley B1). Because many immigrants of the 1990s are poorer and less educated than those who came a decade earlier, schools are being forced to deal more with basic needs such as food, clothing, and housing. For example, Montgomery County has 6,400 ESOL students, the most of any school district in Maryland or the Washington area. More than 65% of students qualify for free or reduced lunches, compared with 17% of all students (Marcus "Immigrants"). "To really reach the children, you have to bring the entire family in," said Mary Lou Henderson, an experienced ESOL teacher. "There's a school world and a home world, and the teacher's role is a bridge that brings these two together" (Kurin).

Kathy Megyeri has previously contributed to the *Maryland English Journal*. She has taught in the Montgomery County School System for 28 years and currently teaches ninth grade writing in the IBM computer lab at Sherwood High.

Immigrants who feel isolated or are unfamiliar with American customs naturally come to the school first for assistance because they see it as a helping institution. Thus, most Washington area teachers do more than their job contracts require, according to school administrator Patricia Kelly, principal at Langley-Park-McCormick Elementary School in Hyattsville, one of Prince George's County's most ethnically diverse schools (Marcus "Immigrant Children"). But with the increased demands on ESOL instructors, "Teachers who have always been everything to their students are now everything and more," says Prince George's County ESOL Supervisor Holly Stein. "The trigger that goes off in teachers' heads about saving kids goes off double in this case," adds Alexandria Superintendent Paul W. Masem (Marcus "Immigrants").

Few outsiders realize the dedication of most ESOL teachers. One recently spent an entire day in an Immigration and Naturalization Service office to help a student's parent get a photo ID for work; another went to a student's home to tutor and ended up translating a job application so the student's mother could work at a local restaurant. A third teacher taught a girl sewing for three weeks last summer in the teacher's home "because she needed it." ESOL teachers in Fairfax County, Virginia, discovered that a recently arrived family was sleeping in a rat-infested house because the family had only $100 a month for rent, and the teachers helped them get an apartment and better-paying jobs. Other ESOL instructors at Bailey's Elementary School, Falls Church Virginia, prepared meals for children whose mother left them alone with only pots of cooked rice when she went to a hospital to deliver a baby (Bates A14).

The irony of this situation is that the federal government has largely turned a deaf ear to the needs of immigrants since most states are not affected. Consequently, public schools have a difficult time educating immigrant children, according to a recent study by the Rand Corporation. The study notes that immigrants make their homes primarily in five states–California, New York, Florida, Texas, and Illinois. "Because the costs and potential benefits from immigration fall overwhelmingly on a few states and local districts, most notably California, the rest of the country has little incentive to concern itself with the education of immigrants," write the study's authors ("Rand Report" 14). The study also notes that the job of educating immigrants is stymied by budget shortfalls as well as the lack of bilingual teachers and foreign-language textbooks and materials.

In my school alone, which is located in an affluent suburban school system only twelve miles north of the nation's capital, we currently enroll 250 students (14% of our total population) who speak 33 languages from 52 countries. The largest numbers are from El Salvador, Ethiopia, and China. The foreign languages most frequently heard are Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Mandarin. Indeed, it is a challenge for non-native English speaking students to pass the mandated state reading and writing tests required for graduation. I am often struck by the apathy of my non-ESOL teaching colleagues who find it so difficult to help these students, who experience what Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY) calls "compassion fatigue" (a diminishing interest in the immigrants' plight), or who are ignorant of students' differing status. According to figures from the 1992 *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, few realize that the term "immigrant" encompasses (1) the 120,000 refugees admitted each year who are fleeing persecution; (2) the 700,000 permanent immigrants who are permitted to settle in the U.S. due to immediate family connections or job skills; (3) the 15-20 million non-immigrants who are temporary guest workers who study, train, visit, and are tourists or agricultural workers; and (4) the estimated three to five million illegal aliens who reside in this country (49).

Many Americans respond, "What will keep these numbers in check?"; "We've lost control of our borders"; "What do we do with all these varied people?"; and "We're not getting the quality of immigrant we used to get." Many still feel that only a certain type of people are Americans because they have a sense of the "proper inhabitant." We no longer have the confidence in America, a national identity to assimilate all newcomers, or that special spirit described in John Higham's *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*. Like the nativism that occurred at the turn of the century, we have again come to fear immigration because our veneer of national identity as a "by-product" nation is endangered by newcomers who threaten to contaminate those already here. One wonders if this repeated and most recent surge in nativism is due to the current economic recession, a fear of status loss, a fear of the unknown, and/or a challenge to our language, culture, and social and political power.

The second issue that most directly affects educators is one of secondary migration. As the early Jews concentrated in New York's Lower East Side but later moved to the Bronx and other city environs, so today's immigrants are not only concentrating in a selected number of states like Florida, New York, Texas, and California, but they are locating themselves within those states in certain areas. These pockets of immigrants are highly visible; compared to other groups of job seekers, they are less mobile because they do not tend to concentrate where there are jobs. Most newcomers (70-80%) come to the U.S. for purposes of family reunification, and these are not people normally drawn to this country because of labor shortages. Our government has attempted to locate "free cases" (those who do not come for "family reunification") in states that receive low numbers of immigrants, such as Illinois (United States Dept. of Health and Human Services 28). However, often within a year, they relocate to areas of high immigrant concentrations. For example, "Cuban rafters" were settled in New Orleans, but they moved to Miami to join other Cubans within a year. Also, religious groups sponsored the Hmong relocation programs in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, but after one year, most were welfare recipients or had moved to the warmer climates of California and Florida. In my own high school, the largest immigrant group comes from El Salvador, not surprising since they are the largest immigrant group in nearby Washington, D.C., as well. So we need to know how states and municipalities with growing numbers of immigrants are coping, particularly as our numbers surge.

The third issue that most directly affects educators and American business is the mismatch of skills needed in this country with the new immigrants who arrive. Many Third World and Latin American newcomers do not have the skills needed to compete in our post-industrial nation that is currently undergoing a tremendous restructuring and downsizing. The remaining jobs require advanced skills. Businesses such as Control Data and Xerox Corporation bring in over 100,000 workers a year on non-immigrant status who are allowed to stay up to six years, but these are computer technicians, scientists, teachers in the fields of advanced math and science, and specialized workers. Consequently, given often limited English and occupational skills, it is almost impossible for the immigrant who comes for reasons of family reunification to compete with highly-skilled workers. Such a problem will worsen as our economy increasingly demands more technological knowledge. Still, the wage-scale in Mexico is one-fourth of America's, so the U.S. Border Patrol captures over one million illegal immigrants, which, they admit, is less than one-half the real number who enter the U.S. Employer sanctions against hiring these immigrants are not working. Is it any wonder that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service is currently constructing a "Berlin Wall" outside Tijuana, Mexico, at the same time that Congress approved NAFTA and the President claimed that Mexican workers will remain in Mexico if NAFTA is passed.

Last, at issue for most educators in the school system is the study of multi-culturalism. Professor Thomas Kessner of the City University of New York said, "If culture is the sum total of truth passed on by a community, then it includes the raising of children, values, and morality" (Kessner). But we mix contradictions if we mix cultures. We must determine if we believe in a cultural pluralism whereby cultures maintain their differences so long as disunity does not occur, or if we are contributionalists whereby each culture contributes something unique to the whole of America. Currently, the Washington, D. C., school system is adopting an Afro-centrist curriculum. How will other systems meet the demand to incorporate multi-cultural material into an already crowded curriculum? And how do we balance the needs of the individual, the family, and society in providing multi-cultural experiences?

The issues of nativism, secondary migration, the mismatch of skills to jobs, and the study of multi-culturalism in schools must be addressed. One immigrant, Anzia Yezierska, wrote in 1932, "I find that in no other country has the newcomer such a direct chance to come to the front and become a partner in the making of the country. Not where you come from, but what is in you and what you are counts in America" (34). Those of us in public education must continue to be inspired by those beliefs as we help immigrants cope with nativism, secondary migration, unemployment, and multi-culturalism at the same time that we appeal for increased funding to address such issues, particularly as they impact on local school districts.

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Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 2

Teaching the Art of the Narrative

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The article presents a step-by-step strategy for teaching short-story writing to high school students using a series of three writing assignments involving scene development, dialogue, and character portrayal.

"When short story season rolls around, I live with a sense of dread. I know I'll have to read endless pages of scrawled, dead prose about Rambo-like robots shooting their way to heaven–it's discouraging, to say the least" (Larson 2). This lament by a high school English teacher typifies the difficulty of teaching students to write a short story. Oftentimes student, first-person memoirs sound like a recap of what happened at the prom or a conversation about the big party at someone's house on Saturday night. Student writers may follow the instructor's directions carefully, detailing who the characters are, what they look like, their mannerisms, and so forth; but their narrations often lack the scene development and sense of timing that gives writing a story-like quality.

Teaching students to write stories is a complicated process, because the finished product involves several components that are difficult to teach simultaneously–building a scene to a climactic moment, dialogue, and character development. How does one teach all of the elements of a good story and get students to incorporate them into the final product?

I use a multi-stage procedure, teaching what I call "the incident" first; then a dialogue assignment; and finally a character sketch, which often lengthens into a short story. Each assignment's goal contributes to the next assignment's development. That is, the lesson of the incident, which is timing and scene development, is incorporated into the dialogue assignment; and both of the lessons into the character sketch. Students may develop three different scenarios, but some become so enthralled with their work that they carry the same basic story through all three stages. Others write a completely new scenario for each assignment.

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The Incident Assignment

Here are some important steps to keep in mind:

1. The main focus of the incident assignment is on *story-telling*, as opposed to dialogue. Keep dialogue to a minimum, although a small exchange may occur to maintain the action of the episode.
2. The incident should encompass one moment in time–not be carried into the next day, week, or even overnight.
3. The moment in time must build to a climax, with the emphasis on timing. Point out that a well-timed climax has much in common with a well-told joke; timing is everything. Avoid writing about arrests for traffic violations, automobile accidents, illegal teen-age parties involving drugs or alcohol, or mob executions. These make awfully dull incidents, and a proliferation of such makes correction tedious.
4. Importantly, do not permit students to kill anyone off in their incidents, a practice which invites *deus ex machina* endings and plots with little thought.

A good source of samples for the incident can be found in *Flash Fiction*, edited by James Thomas (1992), particularly Julia Alvarez's "Snow" and Michael Delp's "Draft Horse." Although the incident assignment need not be a completed story, as are these two examples, both of these stories focus on a single moment in which a scene is developed.

The Dialogue Assignment

Assignment two consists of dialogue. Begin with a small list of things to avoid in good dialogue:

1. Too much narrative/dialogue mix (usually too much narration).
2. Too many buffers (he said, she saw, they observed, and so forth).
3. Dialogue that addresses the reader rather than other characters (tells us things other characters already know or else lectures readers).
4. Too many dialogue descriptors (he announced, she chided, and so forth). Remember, "said" is always the best.

Continue with a small list of things to try to do in good dialogue:

1. Show, do not tell (using he said *alarmingly*, *angrily*, *noisily*, and so forth, instead of having the dialogue reveal these actions or emotions).
2. Dialogue should imitate real speech–do not consistently use whole, formal sentences. Imitate verbal tics. Remember, one character may not entirely hear what the other is saying because he is thinking of a reply while the other is speaking. Consequently, real dialogue is not always logical or sequential.
3. Dialogue should develop character (the most important item).

Next, look at some models. Begin by examining Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*. Students do not have to read the entire book, just the first four pages of Chapter Six. I preview the next few pages by telling students that Lorraine is a high school student who lives with her mother, a private duty nurse. Lorraine's mother, a divorcée, takes care of the terminally ill. The dialogue in this section of the book contains an excellent delineation of character and reveals the essence of this mother-daughter relationship. As students sift through the dialogue, they find that Lorraine's mother is distrustful of men–tells Lorraine they only have "one thing" on their minds; has little compassion for the sick people she attends–"the old guy's throat was closing, and he was bouncing up and down in bed for days"; and makes Lorraine feel guilty about any normal expenses associated with child-rearing–"twenty-three bucks for a dental certificate! I can't even afford to get myself a pair of nylons." There are numerous passages in this scenario that point out how good dialogue reveals character.

Another excellent source of material for dialogue is Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants." This story interjects a sense of setting in just a few lines and uses few buffers in the dialogue. Point out how the author creates a sense of tension and conflict in the relationship of the two characters, who try to enjoy themselves as tourists in Spain but are unable to do so because of the underlying issue they face. Especially skillful about this dialogue is that the couple never fully comes out and says what the "operation" is. The reader can guess, from the use of phrases such as "It's just to let the air in," that the unmentionable subject is unwanted pregnancy and impending abortion. The characters' life of traveling all over the world is threatened by the birth of a child, and sentences such as the girl's, "I'll do it if you want me to" and her boyfriend's response, "If you don't want to, you don't have to. I wouldn't have you do it if you don't want to," clearly indicate that she has all of the responsibility for making the decision. Her remark, "That's all we do–look at things and try new drinks," is a line that will lead students to conclude that the life of endless travel is growing stale.

The dialogue assignment consists of:

1. a conversation between two or more individuals;
2. revelation of character through conversation (Keep emphasizing this to students who want to go back to the incident and focus on story.);
3. the incorporation of the incident in the dialogue itself–students still write about a moment in time and maintain good timing of the climactic moment–but they achieve this through a conversation between two people;
4. the use of "body language," the movements a character makes while he or she speaks to another–vocal intonation, facial expressions, or even simple movements while performing a chore.

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A good exercise in body language is for students to list the steps in a simple chore–washing the car, typing and saving information on a disk, cleaning out the garage, or folding clothing removed from the dryer. Having listed the steps, the writer will integrate the body movements associated with the chore into a conversation with another character. For example, here is Carrie having a conversation with her mother while they are removing dishes from the dishwasher. The italicized lines are examples of body movements.

> *Carrie pulled back the lever of the dishwasher and opened the steaming door.* "Mom," she said. "Do you think I could stay over at Allie's after the dance on Saturday?" *She handed the warm casserole to her mother who was stacking the clean dishes on the shelves.*
>
> "I don't know why you can't come home. You know I love to hear how it went," her mother said. *She buffed the bottom of a copper skillet and hung it on the rack of shiny bottomed pans hanging over the stove.*
>
> *Carrie was quiet for a moment, taking out the silverware, methodically placing it in the mahogany chest on the diningroom table.* "Mom, sometimes you treat me like a baby," Carrie complained. "I mean, it's just to Allie's."

These italicized lines help lend a sense of reality to the story, often providing a sense of setting and background to the conversation.

The Character Sketch Assignment

Finally, students write a character sketch which is launched with what I call the "Landmark Assignment." Writers visualize themselves in the vicinity of a famous landmark in their hometown, one with which they are thoroughly familiar. In Pittsburgh, it is the clock on the corner of Kaufmann's Department store, a location where many passers-by wait for a bus or gather to meet friends. Standing under the clock is a person whose mannerisms seem vaguely familiar to the writer, yet he or she is unable to make out the character's face from a distance. Maybe it is the way the character tilts a head, holds a raincoat over the shoulder, or leans against the building. Perhaps the character is walking toward the clock, exhibiting a stride reminiscent of someone the writer knows, a manner of dress (torn jeans, Phillies' baseball cap worn backwards, black leather jacket), or hairstyle (long blonde hair).

Having imagined themselves in this situation, I give writers a first line prompt, beginning their writings with: "From a distance, I could tell it was __________(name a person) by the way he or she _____________." Then I ask students to describe the person's mannerisms. (This is a good technique for incorporating physical description into a writing without it making it sound like a police rap sheet.) Here is an extended student sample:

> Sara glanced through the smog-filled air, catching a glimpse of a familiar figure just as a bus choked to a stop at the corner. It looked like Mark, but suddenly the figure had turned, the broad expanse of his back facing her. She stepped off the curb, zigzagging through the maze of cars in her path, trying to make out if it was really Mark standing next to the newspaper stand. His jeans hugged a well-toned physique, a small tear in his left knee. Standing with his weight solidly rooted on one leg, the other bent as he propped his foot against the traffic light post. His thumb was unconsciously hooked through the belt loop of his pants. A slight wind blew, ruffling his deep brown hair. He tossed his head, shifted his weight to the other foot, and finally turned in her direction. Yes, it was Mark all right. She hadn't seen him since they'd graduated from high school, two years ago.

This technique produces an active, live story that unfolds before the reader's eyes and leads students away from flat narrations that sound like a conversation with a friend about a Saturday night football game. The writer is immediately involved in the scene being created, because the writer's position is indicated relative to the person at the landmark. Right away the reader gets a sense of Sara's intrigue with a character from her past, the description of his body language hinting at his relaxed, slightly unconventional behavior.

Once the characters are introduced and the setting is developed in the landmark exercise, the next step is to have the narrator interact with the character. Here is part two of Sara and Mark who have just reunited under the Kaufmann's clock:

> "Mark," she called out, her voice timid at first.
>
> Trying to conceal his surprise, Mark stammered, "Sara? Sara Cromer?" His lips curled into a wide grin.
>
> "Yeah. I saw you from across the street and thought I'd stop and see how ya were." Her left hand nervously twisted the gold charm that hung from a delicate chain around her neck.
>
> "I'm back for the holiday break. I'll be in town for a couple of days, then off to my dad's in New York."
>
> "Well, what are you doing for your vacation?" she asked.
>
> Looking down at the cigarette butts littering the sidewalk, he says, "My mom has this thing for nagging people to death. I, ah, just couldn't hang around the house anymore." He stared intently at Sara.
>
> Her cheeks flush a little. "I understand. My mom gets that way sometimes too." She looks over at the pigeons waddling on the pavement. Her stomach fluttered with the same feeling she got every time Mark trudged through the door to chemistry class, three minutes late. She thought of his wisecracks, the crooked smile. Her face became serious as she mustered the courage to say, "Um, well, what are you doing today?"

> "Nuthin', exactly. I'm trying to scrounge up a few bucks. I'm busted flat."

By now the reader is intrigued with the characters introduced in this opening scene, which comes alive in a dramatic way. Because the narrator is immersed in the story, the student-writer becomes an active participant in the drama depicted.

> Later, Mark asks Sara out to a party–startled by his invitation, Sara responded, sounding a little more eager than she wanted, "I'd love to!"
>
> After copying her phone number down, Mark tossed out suggestions, "How 'bout we go to a party? My friend, Charlie, is having a bash at his place. Parents in Florida this week. Should be pretty crazy. Always are." Pausing, he offered another suggestion. "Or, we could head over to this type club I go to. It's called Obsession. There's always a crowd there. I know the bouncers so I shouldn't have a problem getting you in."
>
> Sara now has doubts about Mark, but agrees to go with him. Just as she is about to depart, a skinny man with greasy hair walked over to Mark. His blood-shot eyes stood out against his pallid skin. Looking over at her warily, he said, "Are we gonna take care of this here?" Instinctively, she stepped behind Mark, clutching his arm.
>
> "Manuel, I'll meet you across the street in a minute. I just want to finish here," he said, nodding in Sara's direction. The man walked across the street toward the bench on the other side.
>
> "What did that man want?" Sara asked, not really needing an answer. So many emotions rioted inside her mind, her heart pounding out of control.
>
> Mark took her hand, "Sara, I don't know what to say to you," his voice sounded out in a low mumble.
>
> "What is there to say?" Sara said, her voice trailing off, leaving the words unspoken.

When students have practiced the techniques for story-telling and are launched into assignments spontaneously, they often write freely about deep emotional issues, the story becoming the outward manifestation of their psychological interiors. Their characters take on real-life personalities because they develop scenarios that come from past experience. The expressive content of their stories becomes a kind of "objective correlative" for their emotional state.

According to Gabrielle Rico, story-telling has cathartic and therapeutic value: "Although the emotions reach beyond language, it is words, used evocatively and metaphorically, which make patterns of our quagmire of feelings. Through the complex system of sounds we call language, we reach constantly toward expression. Through expression, we grope our way out of the quicksand of emotional reaction onto solid emotional ground" (118). The classroom instructor, then, becomes a valuable catalyst, enabling students to tap into their richest sources of story-telling.

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Calling All English Leaders

The Executive Committee of the Conference on English Leadership invites you to Novembers's NCTE Pre-Conference Convention open to all English teaching professionals who are now leaders and to those who are planning to become leaders. The Convention will be held in Orlando, Florida, November 16 through 18. The theme of this year's conference is Leadership: Meeting the Challenge of Change. This conference offers you leadership materials, user-friendly workshops, collegial support, networking, and distinguished national speakers.

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Maryland English Journal
Volume 28, Number 2

Roundball Respect

William J. McKenna
Northern High School, Baltimore City

Pre-service teachers, as well as battle-scarred veterans striving to earn–and provide their students with–respect may build rapport based on mutual interests. McKenna reaches the basketball fanatics in his classroom by drawing upon their mutual interests in the sport.

Respect is hard to come by in many city classrooms. In many ways, you see, a city classroom is just like the city streets: words don't count for much; action does.

This is not to say that it is impossible for teachers to get respect. It just means that most teachers don't earn it by simply walking in the door. There are strategies, though, which can be employed.

Intimidation is one. But this must be used sparingly, for too many city students' lives are full of guns and knives, so a teacher's tough talk often packs little force. Discipline is another. But this, too, has its problems. The last thing a good teacher wants to be is a great cop.

Ultimately, respect comes through a mixture of ingredients: a little honesty and hard work here, with a touch of salt and discipline there, combined with a bit of creativity, personality, and pepper and–voilà!–you get a bowl of respect and, perhaps, a pretty decent class, too.

I also like to use another ingredient: basketball. Most of my students are basketball fanatics. In fact, if they are given a few minutes of free time, they will invariably litter my room with roundball rap:

"Man, you just can't touch Magic," one will say.

"Please," another retorts, "Magic is a no good bum who couldn't shoot and can't play no more. He ain't nothin'."

"Nothin'? Man, you crazy. How many rings do he have? How many, huh? Just answer me, how many?"

A third interrupts: "You," he says to everyone, "was born stupid. The Bulls is the boys."

"Ah man, shut up, just shut up," says still another, "the Bulls ain't got nothin' but Jordan, and...."

The bell rings, and the quarreling quintet goes out the door, heads shaking, fingers pointing. They, to use their lingo, "is arguing and I is beat."

Will McKenna teaches ninth and eleventh grade English at Northern High School in Baltimore City. His work recently appeared in nationally distributed sports magazines, *Sportslook* and *Tuff Stuff.*

I sometimes ask them questions about the games or players. At first they are astonished that a teacher, a white one no less, knows anything about the game. And then, inevitably, the question comes: "Mr. McKenna, can you play?"

"A little," I say. Then, again inevitably, another student says, "Shoot, y'all, Mr. McKenna ain't got no game."

"Doesn't have any," I respond. And then, for enticement, add: "Don't talk before you see."

Immediately there is an interest, and the young antagonist pursues the matter: "Let's play," he half-demands. "OK," I say, "but I get the ball first."

The next week we played. I got the ball first, dribbled easily a few times and then quickly went around my short, young competitor and scored. His eyes were surprised. A few jump shots and a couple of drives later, the score was 6-1, my way, and the humble queries began: "Mr. McKenna, did you play in college?" 8-2. "Mr. McKenna, what team do you play for?" 9-2. "How old are you?" 10-2. Game over.

The next day the class was mildly shocked when they saw the score written (rather boldly, I might add) on the board. They too had questions about my past, but mostly they just laughed at the loser. The following week, I played another student–this one a little taller and a lot better–and won 13-9. A crowd of 30 or so students watched the game. They rooted against me. Said I couldn't play. And then roared in approval when I drained an 18 foot fade away to win the game.

By coincidence, while our miniature March Madness was unfolding, we were writing parables in class. Each student had to write an original parable and read it aloud. Some of the stories were rather sterile, but one, I thought, was quite interesting. The author was the loser of the first basketball game. His tale, which was about underestimating the competition, was telling: his title, "You Can't Judge a Book by Its Color," speaks for itself. From the class, he got a nice round of applause. From me he earned a "B" on the assignment, one of his few passing grades of the year.

In the coming weeks, I will play more of my students and the competition, I know, will only get bigger and better. Presumably, I will lose one of these games. Who knows? But really I'm in a no-lose situation; for, at least for now, my students know that I, their teacher, am real. I'm a human being with a decent jumper.

They can respect that. And, for the moment, so can I. It is the future that I'm worried about, though. What will happen when the brownish wisps of curls that now live so easily atop my brow turn gray or even fade away? What will happen when my jump-shot turns into a set-shot? What will happen when the 1990s become a long, long time ago?

I wonder.

I wonder if I, like a tree viciously torn from the earth, will become jaded and tired. I wonder, if I, when it is time to tell, will give my own children a bit of bleak, foreboding advice about the profession that my father once gave me, "Don't teach."

Or, I wonder, if I like the gnarled but stubborn carrot, will accept the manipulations and tribulations of the journey, make them part of my personality, and drive on ever deeper into the earth in relentless pursuit of life.

Most of all, I wonder if in thirty years or so I will be there, amidst the confusion and creativity of the classroom, still trying to earn my keep and win my respect.

Maryland Showcase for Young Writers

This showcase features the writing of young people in the fourth through eighth grades. The writing was submitted by Marge Lewis of Pittsville Middle School; Margot Massie of Sudlersville Elementary School; Carol Peck, a poet in schools through out the State, whose submissions are from Sligo Adventist School in Montgomery County and Magothy River School in Arnold; Jackie Sachs of Magothy River Middle School; Karen Shinn of Thurmont Middle School; and Mary Ellen Wing of Cabin John Middle School in Potomac.

Jason Brooks, Grade 8

I HOPE TO BE

I hope to be an Astronaut,
To explore around in space,
To conduct research
And learn more about the place.

To visit other worlds, other galaxies, and more,
To help the human race
Expand their knowledge store.

To chart the many galaxies
That float around in space,
To help technology improve
And diseases to be cured.

That is what I want to-be;
An Astronaut is the dream for me.

Julie Copiz, Grade 8

CONFUSION

Confusion looks like modern art,
all jumbled
and hard to understand;
It moves in swirls,
like a dandelion seed
dancing in the wind;
The sound is like a cat
lost in darkness
It feels like an itch
you cannot scratch;
It tumbles all around inside,
like butterflies;
It smells like when there are cookies
in the oven
and asparagus and tomato sauce
on the stove;
It tastes like fish ice cream;
Confusion is a tuneless whistle.

Kelli Simkins, Grade 8

EDUCATION, THE FUTURE

Do you want to be smart? Would you like to learn?
Whether math or fine art, step up, take your turn.

Don't keep your mind in a cage; let your imagination grow.
No matter what age, there's a lot you don't know.

The health of your bod, and what it will do.
You can learn about God; He'll surely help you.

Everyone across the nation has a future planted.
Do the same with your education; don't take it for granted.

It isn't too late; start as a kid.
Open your future's gate; you'll be glad that you did.

Jessica Yirenkyi, Grade 8

LITTLE GREEN MONSTERS

Little green monsters
Taunting in my head,
They keep me up at night
Jumping around in my bed;
They greet me in the morning
With a big greedy smile,
Teasing that they'll only
Stay awhile;

But every day they seem to grow
And multiply,
They're all around me—
I want to cry;
Finally they realize
The damage they've done,
"At last!" they cry,
"We've won, we've won!"

Every time they teach me
A lesson on how bad I've been
And tell me over and over
Never to be jealous again;
But I never listen;
Stubborness is an attitude
I don't seem to lack,
'Cause the little green monsters
Soon wind up coming back.

Sarah White, Grade 6

WHITE IS. . .

White is the color that I feel
        when I'm twirling my baton–
        it spins round and round.
White smells like homemade ice cream
        when it's really hot outside
A color of wonder when touching
        a book of my life.
White can make me happy, sad, and
        sometimes mad.

This is my name, my color, my life.

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Mark Larsson, Grade 7

HALLOWEEN

The sound of cats screeching
and witches cackling;
The feel of fear
racing through your body;
The smell of sweet chocolate
in the air;
Tons of gruesome goblins
and monstrous monsters
racing around;
The taste of candy
slowly melting in your mouth;
Glowing pumpkins and
dimly lit lights
decorate the streets.

On All Hallows Eve
The ghosts and goblins
and witches and monsters
Come out to play among
the innocent children
Disguised as monsters.

Amanda Wolfe, Grade 8

I AM

I am a normal thirteen year old.
I wonder what my future holds.
I hear about murder and drugs on TV.
I see innocent people dying.

I am a normal thirteen year old.
I pretend it's all a bad dream.
I feel our society is in danger.
I worry that in a few years there will be
no "nice and caring" people.
I cry when I think of this world's fate.

I am a normal thirteen year old.
I understand that no one is perfect.
I dream that the world is full of love,
not hate.
I try to help in any way I can.
I hope the world becomes a better place
for my generation.
I am a normal thirteen year old.

Anne Halstead, Grade 7

I AM . . .

I am a rabbit–
I'm quiet but fast;
I am a piano with the pedal down,
because I hang onto things
until I'm finished;
I am an opal–
I sparkle from the inside;
I am cheese,
because I'm hard to digest;
I am a thunderstorm–
I get angry quickly,
but clear up just as fast;
I am a saw,
because I cut through things easily;
I am a rose–
you have to look deep inside me
to discover who I really am.

Ernest Ponraj, Grade 6

THIRD EAR

My third ear can hear people dying
of starvation;
My third ear can hear stars twinkling
in the sky;
It can hear the sun rise in the morning;
It can hear people dreaming at night;
My third ear can hear the moon glowing
in the night;
My third ear can hear fish swimming
in the ocean;
It can hear a snake creeping up
in its prey;
It can hear a snail walking to and
from its house;
My third ear can hear the colors
on a painting talk to each other.

THREE SHORT POEMS

Chris Crossley, Grade 4

SHARKS

Sharks
sharp-toothed reptiles
slowly swimming for fish
searching for nice fat fish
Hungry

Robin Cahall, Grade 4

MONSTERS

Monsters
bumpy mammals
quickly sneaking food
eating freshly warm cookies
Delicious!

Rebecca Jayne, Grade 4

WIND

Wind
perfectly moving
whirling, swirling, blowing
chilly gusts merrily flying
Smooth

Lyndsey Thornett, Grade 6

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was
Certainly a great man because
He fought for the equality of blacks and whites.
He fought for black Americans and their rights.

He said he had a dream,
But back then it didn't seem
That blacks and whites would ever come together.
Some whites just didn't believe that this
would make the world better.

To the blacks the world was all white.
Because of this Martin Luther King did fight.
There were fountains and restrooms marked "No Blacks,"
And on the buses they were forced to sit in the back.
He spoke to the world from his heart
And fought for equal rights from the very start.
Give up, did he never, only pressed on.
We owe him society, and his memory, never gone.

Rachel Renae Williams, Grade 7

FOREVER MINE

As we lift our eyes to the heavens
We see him
Floating upward
Face without expression
Heart without desire
Mind without feeling.
He is not frightened in his flight
He is calm
Relaxed
Numb
He will be remembered
With love
With anguish
With pain
He touched many hearts
Tenderly
Lovingly
Sweetly
Forever in my heart
My love
My sunshine
My hero.

Deanna Codling, Grade 6

NATIVE AMERICAN SPIRIT POEM

The grasshopper taught the lava to hop;
The sunshine taught the gray wolf
to shine;
The dolphin taught the blizzard
how to be graceful;
The hills taught the sleet to be still;
The mountain taught the weeping willow
to stand straight;
The tornado taught the snow to swirl;
The ant taught the polluted lake
to feel confident;
The moon taught the tulip to shine
while you can;
The treetops taught the sky
to stay tall.

Extra Copies of *Maryland English Journal* Volume 28, Number 2

Subject to availability, single copies of the *Journal* can be purchased from the editor for $5.00. Make checks payable to MCTELA and send to:

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Department of English
Frostburg State University
Frostburg, Maryland 21532-1099

Publishing The *Maryland English Journal*

Victoria Ross Everett
Maryland English Journal Editorial Intern
Frostburg State University

This article contrasts and compares producing a state-wide English journal with making a book.

Publishing has been described by Aliki Brandenberg as an author's manuscript going through numerous stages of preparation before it reaches the reader in book form. This is true. Books do go through many stages prior to reader review. As Brandenberg implies, it is also true that most publishers follow the same basic steps. These steps include acquiring the manuscript; editing the manuscript; designing and printing the manuscript; and, finally, marketing the book. There exist both similarities and differences between making a book and producing a state-wide journal.

As far as publication of the *Maryland English Journal* is concerned, many of the steps followed in making a book are also followed in producing the *Journal*, but not all. For instance, in acquiring a book manuscript, literary agents are hired by authors to negotiate for them in finding a suitable publisher and handling legal matters. To authors published in the *Maryland English Journal*, these elements are not applicable. The authors who write for the *Journal* are teachers, state-wide and even nation-wide, who are professionals in the field of English Language Arts, with the exception of those qualifying for the Maryland Showcase For Young Writers, whose teachers have nominated their work to appear. Putting out a "Call for Submissions," written early in the start-up process of Volume 28, Number 1, is the *MEJ*'s substitute for a literary agent.

The submissions request goes out to departments of English and Language Arts in schools all over the state of Maryland, including the University of Maryland System. The "Call for Submissions" requests that writers of manuscripts follow certain guidelines in preparing for and finally sending in their work. For instance, submitters have to send four hard copies of their work, as well as the work on computer disk. The *Journal* receives an abundance of replies from all over–and outside–the state, with topics of great interest to members of the English education field. When submissions come in, they are accounted for and sent to members of the review board. Associate editors receive works submitted to the *Journal* and have four choices of judgment in deciding the fate of the manuscript. When the manuscripts return to the *MEJ* editorial office, they are put through the

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Victoria Ross Everett, a junior majoring in sociology and English, and minoring in writing, edits the newsletter for the Frostburg State chapter of Alpha Phi Omega. She has participated in the FSU-Ireland exchange program and was recently nominated for a campus Outstanding Student Leader Award.

wringer of the editing process.

Editing is the process of putting the manuscript into publishable form. Many times, manuscripts come in needing clarification in content, spelling, punctuation, or grammar. This is one reason for the manuscript to be on disk, so that it may be corrected by the editor (and editorial intern) in an expedient manner. With a book in the making, many editors divide job duties among the staff. For instance, the editor may decide that one person could clarify content within a manuscript and another may research the facts, while still others proofread for spelling and grammar. *MEJ* does not have the luxury of dividing up work. The editor and her intern handle many of the details themselves. They both handle clarifying content and researching facts; *MEJ* expects responsibility on the part of the author by stating within the submission guidelines that "content of articles is the responsibility of the authors."

Designing and printing responsibilities for the *Maryland English Journal* are less involved than those of producing a book. The design and printing of a book takes an enormous amount of machinery and *MEJ* is not involved in high volume production. The *Journal* is produced as a paperback, or what is called "softbound" in the industry. Underpinning any publishing venture is always a budget, and the *MEJ* budget is not ample enough to allow a hardback production, nor is it necessary due to the size and nature of the journal.

As far as what the *Journal* looks like, the design is created on-screen, through a computer desktop publishing program, and the printing is configured in the system as well. After many hours of arranging, rearranging, and moving text from place to place, a final layout of *MEJ* emerges. The computer is a magnificent tool that allows a designer to create a professional publication. It allows the editor to see the manuscript enveloped in a package of pride. The *Maryland English Journal* has a cover that is eye-catching (all through the fine work of a production editor applying what Sandy terms "the power of information technology"[107]), which makes it easy for people to view and want to see the inside contents. This is all part of the marketing link, the final phase in publishing.

Marketing the book, or in this case the *Journal*, is important for letting the readership know about works done by scholars in their areas. The members of the Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts receive the *Journal* as part of their membership subscriptions; additional marketing of the *Journal* consists of hanging flyers around English departments, publicizing it by word of mouth, and making it available for sale at local libraries, campus bookstores, and MCTELA conferences. For books intended for a wider audience, Brandenberg suggests having an author visit bookstores and hold autograph sessions. Or, perhaps the author or publisher could give the publication to a celebrity in hopes that they will give it a rave review to the public. In this instance, we have indeed given our publication to one of the local celebrities–President Gira's review of the *Journal* is not out yet!

The experience of working with Dr. Judy Pula on the *Journal* was a wonderful opportunity, and it gave me great respect for the world of publication and all that goes into it. In addition to the actual technical skills involved, I learned and polished such skills as networking, patience, and organization. Dr. Pula is a great editor and mentor. We learned from each other in this process of editing and production. In reflecting upon the semester spent working with her on the *Maryland English Journal*, I can describe it in this way to help people understand the start-up process that we had to conquer.

It is as if MCTELA handed us a big chunk of wood and a box of tools and said to make something from it. We had to agree where to carve, how deep, how shallow, where not to carve at all, and finally, where to sand it down. As Susan Peck MacDonald might explain it, we moved from undefined multiple possibilities to a defined process; our collaborations with each other and with the other members of the *MEJ* editorial staff produced the "synergy" Reither and Vipond describe as "one of the most salient advantages in...[a collaborative] project"(858). Thus we have the *Maryland English Journal*, a publication sculpted collaboratively with joy and pride.

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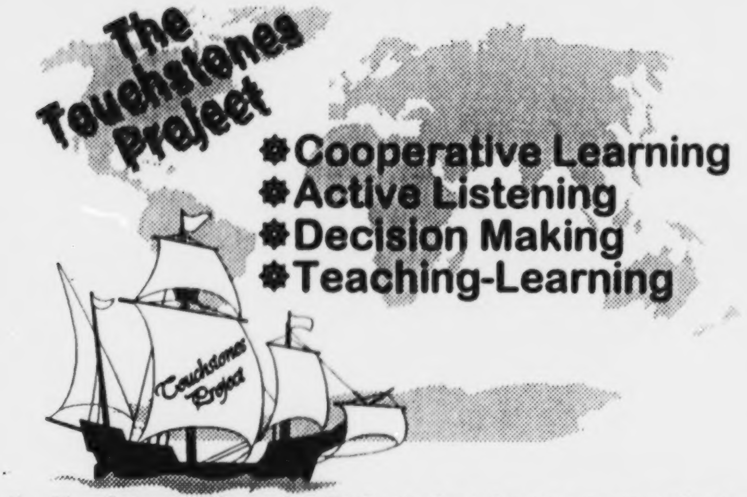

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>
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A Grant Writing How-to For Teachers

Presented by Rose Reissman
Thursday, September 29, 1994
4:30-7:30 pm
The Tremont Plaza
222 St. Paul Place
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Cosponsored by the *National Council of Teachers of English* and the
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Take Yourself for Grant-Ed is a seminar designed to teach grant writing skills and techniques to teachers. In this seminar participants learn the skills of developing generic and customized grant proposals. Limited technical assistance is provided before and after the session. This seminar is for teachers (and others) interested in proposal writing and learning about identifying resources in foundation, corporate, and federal government funding. Participants are encouraged to bring a current boilerplate proposal, a recently funded proposal, and/or a proposal that did not get funded.

The seminar will be led by Rose Reissman, a knowledgeable, experienced New York City teacher. Ms. Reissman is the creator and developer of _Take Yourself for Grant-ed_ workshops for teachers. She is the author of numerous successful grant proposals including: 20 Department of Education Title VII Projects, a Javits Project, Geraldine Dodge Foundation, LRE Funding Programs, American Association of University Women, Chase Neighborhood, National Council of Teachers of English, Bill of Rights Education Consortium, and Council of Basic Education Grants. Ms. Reissman is a funding consultant to the Oklahoma Bar Association, the Temple Leap Project, and the National Council of Teachers of English. She specializes in Federal RFPs and provides ongoing technical assistance in the preparation and editing of proposals.

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Tell us about your grant writing/funding experience.
Will you bring along a proposal (boilerplate, funded, unfunded)?
If yes, what is the subject/topic?
If you would like to send it along to have it pre-reviewed, please attach and send it along with your answers and check.

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Maryland English Journal

Published by the Maryland Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts
The State Affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English

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Editorial Office
Department of English
Frostburg State University
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